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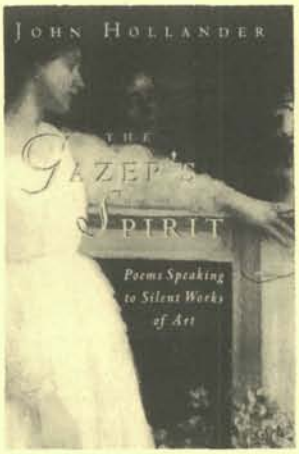

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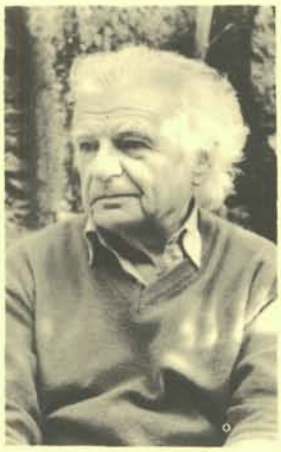

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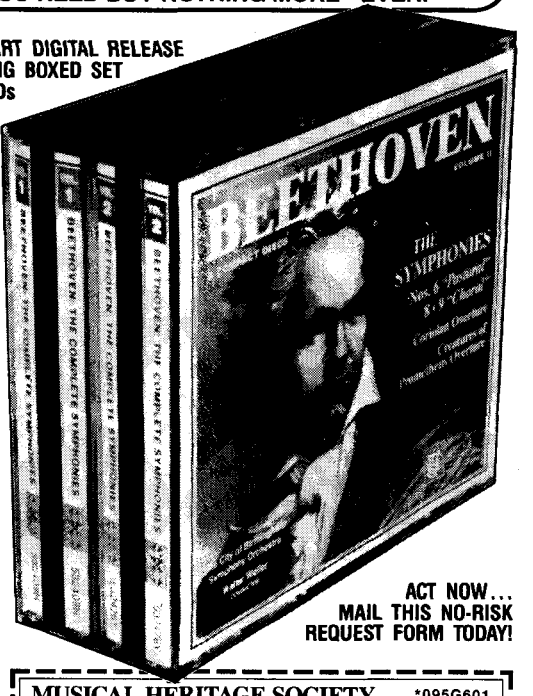

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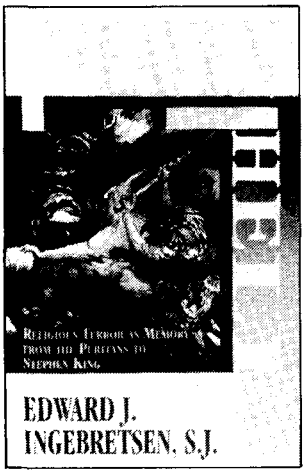

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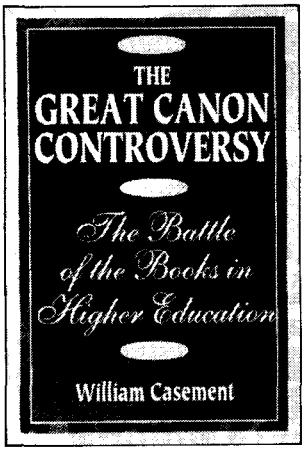

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A Nice Little Knack for Name-Dropping

ARISTIDES

I was a name-dropper before I knew what name-dropping is. What name-dropping is, to put it in a quick formulation, is using the magic that adheres to the names of celebrated people to establish one's superiority while at the same time making the next person feel the drabness of his or her own life. Name-dropping is a division of snobbery, and one of the snob's missions is to encourage a feeling, however vague, of hopelessness in others. A small but quite genuine art, name-dropping, an art that requires the right, consummately light touch, for, the least heavy-handedness in this line, as in so many of the fine arts, can destroy everything.

My own early efforts as a name-dropper had less to do with encouraging hopelessness in others than with inflaming hope in myself. The scene of my initial foray into name-dropping was an immense amusement park in Chicago called Riverview. Torn down in 1968 and now the site of an industrial park and a shopping center, Riverview contained an Aladdin's Castle fun house, a tunnel of love, a motorcycle hippodrome, a tower of terror called the Pair-O-Chutes, a delightful plunge into water known as the Chutes, roller coasters named the Bobs, the Greyhound, the Fireball, the Blue Streak, and other entertainments called the Flying Turns, the Boomerang, the Flying Scooters, the Dodge 'Em, along with cat games, free-throw shooting, a freak show, and much else besides.

At sixteen, my friends and I, middle-class flaneurs, would take ourselves to Riverview on steamy summer nights, there to view the passing scene. The part of the scene that interested us most was high-school girls, whom we tried to pick up—with, let me say straightaway, a pathetically poor success rate. In this operation, I led the way, and I did it through name-dropping. We would come upon three or four girls, and I would ask them, in my most earnest fashion, where they went to school. If they answered, say, Steinmetz, I would reply, "Then you must know my cousin Jack Pully." If they answered Von Steuben, I would reply, "Then you must know my cousin Hershie Carl." If they answered Lake View, I would reply, "Then you must know my cousin Ron Youngblood."

Lest anyone think I belong to an impressively multi-ethnic extended family, let me say that Jack, Hershie, and Ron were not in fact my cousins. They were star basketball players at, respectively, Steinmetz, Von Steuben, and Lake View. My (false) relationship with these talismanic names unfailingly impressed these girls, and though my friends and I were not very good at what is nowadays called "coming to closure," my phony name-dropping earned us, at least conversationally, a foot in the door. The larger lesson to be learned here, of course, is that to Shakespeare's question "What's in a name?" the correct answer is "Used properly, quite a bit, actually."

To this day, more than forty years later, I continue to drop names. I think of myself as an occasional and, I'll allow, inveterate, if not, I hope, habitual name-dropper, in no way resembling the man whose name-dropping Edmund Wilson described as "like the rattle of rain on the roof." I recently caught myself saying: "Paul McHugh, a friend of mine who is the head of psychiatry at Johns Hopkins, thinks that sex-change operations are likely one day to be viewed as the lobotomies of the second half of the twentieth cen-

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tury." I have said more than once: "George Will, with whom I talk from time to time, has a son who went to Northwestern on a baseball scholarship." I mentioned to someone the other day: "Judith Martin, who writes the 'Miss Manners' column, told me that you never want to wear a white dinner jacket to a wedding unless you are planning to bring along a full set of drums." And then a few years ago, in teaching a course on Henry James, I inquired about the possibility that the character Quint in "The Turn of the Screw" may represent pure evil. When a student asked what I meant by evil, I found myself replying: "I hope you will forgive a bit of name-dropping, Mr. Koenig, but I mean, very precisely, the work of the Devil."

It shouldn't be any surprise that people are impressed by even mildly famous names. I find I'm as susceptible to celebrity as the next person, maybe a touch more so. The other day, for example, at lunch in a neighborhood restaurant, I saw a dark, still very fit-looking man, dapperly turned out, maybe a decade older than I, sitting two booths in front of me. My lunch companion pointed out that this was the old Chicago White Sox outfielder, Orestes "Minnie" Minoso. Minoso, a Cuban, was a more than respectable, though just slightly less than great, player. I felt no need to go up and thank him for the pleasure his play had given me over the years; the people who ran the restaurant knew who he was and accorded him the attention properly owed the locally famous. But I felt pleased to be in the same restaurant with—if I may—Minnie, whose aura added more than a touch of tarragon to my own food.

Years ago, in New York, at a Chinese restaurant called The Pearl, I felt distinctly distracted when Paul Newman and Joanne Woodward walked in. (Funny, an hour later I was hungry for fresh celebrities.) One evening at LaGuardia, I saw Floyd Patterson, once heavyweight champion of the world, and, because no one else seemed to notice him, I went up to him and said that I thought him a great boxer (he wasn't, quite, but what the hell!). At ten years old or so, I met Tony Zale, then the middleweight champion of the world, and I was duly impressed. Several years ago I had dinner in Los Angeles with six other people, one of whom was the television actress Barbara Eden, who, it pleased me to discover, required little in the way of extra attention. But, as name-dropping goes, all this, I fear, is rather small change.

Let us now consider someone handling larger denominations. The screenwriter and novelist John Gregory Dunne was among those recently asked by the editors of *Esquire* magazine to name a woman he admired. His choice was Katrina vanden Heuvel, currently the editor of the *Nation* and the granddaughter of the powerful Hollywood agent Jules Stein. Mr. Dunne recalls for us his memory of Miss vanden Heuvel at parties at her grandparents' house, where "one mixed with Gregory Peck and Warren Beatty and Jennifer Jones and the odd maharani arriving from India." He also recalls a slightly older Miss vanden Heuvel for us at her mother's Central Park West apartment, "where all the nobility of arts and letters regularly congregated"—toot your kazoo here for some rather debased nobility—"William Styron and Norman Mailer and Gore Vidal and Woody Allen and Lillian Hellman and Robert Rauschenberg." The subtext here, as the kids in literary criticism say, is represented by that balding gentleman with the paunch, one Mr. Dunne—and not Finley Peter Dunne either—happily mixing with all these names. Ah, sure, and it's a glorious and glamorous life, that lived among the famous.

John Gregory Dunne's is name-dropping by indirection, which is one way of going about it. Another, more direct way is what is called "the secondary name-drop." A specialist in the secondary name-drop, according to his son, was Ben Sonnenberg, the public relations man, who used to claim he was in the business of erecting very large pedestals for very small statues. Sonnenberg was a man who could claim, "I know the difference between Irving Berlin and Isaiah Berlin, and I know them both." The secondary name-drop, as he practiced it, entailed making plain that one not only knew the famous but had a kind of kitchen intimacy with them. When asked if he knew George Gershwin, for example, Sonnenberg would reply: "Know him? I used to play gin rummy with his mother."

I love that and only wish I could find occasions to put it to use. Did I know Diaghilev? Know him? I used to play racquetball with his

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brother Irwin. Did I know Louis Armstrong? Know him? He sold me his old *Oxford English Dictionary*. Oscar Levant was once asked if he knew Doris Day. "Know her?" Levant is supposed to have replied, "I knew her before she was a virgin."

Another refinement on name-dropping is to drop not the name but the nickname or diminutive or private name of the famous person. This needs to be done with a studied casualness. In literary circles, here are some of the possibilities: Red (Robert Penn) Warren, Bunny (Edmund) Wilson, Archy (Archibald) MacLeish, Cal (Robert) Lowell, Kitty (Katherine Anne) Porter, Freddy (A. J.) Ayer, Joe (A. J.) Liebling, Wystan (W. H.) Auden, and Lizzie (Elizabeth) Hardwick.

One of the technical difficulties of name-dropping is that one cannot always be sure that the person one is talking to will be suitably impressed with the name one has dropped. This is a concern if one has a wide range of acquaintances. A name that will capture attention in one circle may achieve no more than empty looks in another. All the literary names in my last paragraph are unlikely to cut much ice at a Bears-Packers game. Few things are sadder than a name-dropper carrying the luscious load of a name he cannot drop.

Alan Bennett, the English comedian and playwright, who, so far as I know, is not at all a name-dropper, nonetheless nicely illustrates the point. Mr. Bennett's father was a butcher in the city of Leeds, and among his customers was a family named Fletcher. The Fletchers had a daughter named Valerie, who married a man named Eliot, a poet—T. S. Eliot actually. Bennett's mother was one day introduced to Eliot on a street in Leeds and had no idea who he was. Bennett tried to explain to his mother, but, as he recounts, "*The Waste Land* not figuring in Mam's scheme of things," he didn't have great success. "The thing is," Bennett finally said, "he won the Nobel Prize." To which his mother, not overly excited, replied: "Well, I'm not surprised. It was a beautiful overcoat."

In most circles T. S. Eliot is a fine name to drop. So, I should say, is Winston Churchill. Stravinsky isn't at all bad, though Picasso is probably better. Balanchine is nice. Various of the Kennedys might ring the gong, excluding Ted and Joe the father. Vladimir Nabokov is an excellent drop. Isaiah Berlin gives good value; best, though, to refer to him by his first name only, getting that pronunciation, with two long *i*'s, right. Kingsley is another first-name-only drop; besides, someone once said that his full name, Kingsley Amis, sounded rather like the name of an English village. In his day, Somerset Maugham's name dropped with a lovely ping. Someone dropped Cary Grant on me a few months back and, truth to tell, got my attention.

Is it a sign of the leanness of our times that there are fewer and fewer living names that seem worth dropping? If I tell you that I had lunch with, say, Steven Spielberg, would you be impressed? Somehow I don't think so. What about Barry Bonds or Joe Montana? Great athletes both, yet neither seems very exciting. Gloria Steinem? Mike Nichols? These names don't bang the bong, at least not on my block. "Spent last night in the company of Madonna and Mick Jagger. Haven't had so much fun since that lunch I had in Tangier with Yo Yo Ma and Dennis Rodman." Sorry. No fireworks. The earth refuses to move.

Every generation, every social group, every interest group has its own set of approved names. In certain circles in Chicago, a long night with Mike Ditka might be as the French Revolution was to Wordsworth: "Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive." I don't think dropping Mike's name would have gone over big with Red, Cal, Bunny, and the boys. In Washington, the best names to drop are those of politicians—chiefly, make no mistake, those of politicians in power, the more powerful, the more resonant the name—with that of an occasional Supreme Court justice to leaven the loaf.

At 6:30 one spring morning in Washington, on my way to the airport, I was picked up by a heavyset black cabdriver in front of the Cosmos Club. A man filled with bonhomie, comfortably seated in his cab with a mug of coffee in hand, he announced that he had just dropped off Franco Harris's nephew. He assumed that I would know who Franco Harris is, and he was correct: Harris is the former great running back from the Pittsburgh Steelers who in a play-off game against the Raiders made the famous touchdown catch known as the "immaculate reception." We discussed that catch at some length, and

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then he went on to tell me he used to work the lights at a once famous nightclub in Atlantic City, where he had been friendly with the singer Billy Daniels (drop) and the comedian George Kirby (drop). A very agreeable fellow, this cabdriver was establishing himself as someone who had shaken many an important hand.

"May I ask," he inquired as we approached National Airport, "if you are someone whose autograph I ought to have?"

"Not yet worth having," I answered.

When I asked him why he would ask such a question, he mentioned that a fair number of famous people in government and journalism come in and out of the Cosmos Club, where he had picked me up, and he wondered if I might be one of them. I thanked him for a pleasant ride, over-tipped him—a man in touch with so many famous people, to my way of thinking, deserves more than an ordinary tip—and flew home.

That cabdriver's name-dropping seemed to me not at all invidious or otherwise unpleasant. In dropping his few names from sports and show business, he was merely making plain to me that his hadn't been all that dull a life. This was name-dropping with a friendly face. Most of us, after all, would much rather hear about the celebrated than the obscure. It is only the unbearable sucking up to them that sickens.

Ten or so years ago I found myself knee-deep in the Big Namey when I was asked to be a member of the National Council of the National Endowment for the Arts. A small number of moderately famous people in the arts were among my fellow council members: Martha Graham, Robert Joffrey, Helen Frankenthaler, Celeste Holm, Robert Stack, Marvin Hamlisch (briefly), and Toni Morrison.

At first, I felt myself pleased to be among them. Here I am, thought I, a simple lad from the middlewest, sitting amongst these famous artists. How grand! But then, in time—and not very much time, either—I noted their flaws and their various shortcomings. Some were spectacularly narrow in their interests and as spectacularly broad in their ignorance. Some clearly had received too much attention for too long—what I would call altogether too much love outside the home. Few things, by the way, are more pleasing than feeling superior to a celebrated person. It gives one a heightened sense of the world's injustice and folly, which, when one isn't especially wounded by that injustice or stung by that folly, can be a considerable comfort.

Finding the famous a little disappointing seems to be a fairly common experience. A friend of mine, an art critic, tells of being introduced to Edward G. Robinson at an art exhibition. He admired Robinson's acting as much as that of any movie actor then alive, and when Robinson asked my friend if he might join him as he made his round of the exhibition, he said yes indeed, he would be honored. And so he was, for roughly fifteen minutes, until Robinson's rather platitudinous conversation about art—he was, you may recall, a collector—led my friend to wonder, "How do I get rid of this guy?"

If the celebrated do not turn out to be disappointing, they are likely to prove, alas, all too much like the rest of us. An acquaintance recently told me about stepping into the men's room after a dinner at the Pierre Hotel in honor of a retiring magazine editor and finding himself trough-by-trough between Henry Kissinger and Rupert Murdoch. He was a touch dizzy to find himself mingling (not quite the precise word) with the famous, until he noted that, like himself, his trough-mates, being in their sixties, seemed less interested in their intrinsic glamour than in the mechanics of the task at hand.

My father used to tell a story in which one day at lunch his boss, noticing a boy at a nearby table, became very excited, grabbed my father by the elbow, and announced that there was someone he wanted him to meet. He then introduced my father to the boy, and they engaged in a bit of empty chatter. Upon returning to their own table, my father asked who the boy was. "Oh," said his boss. "You don't know? *[Dramatic pause—wait for it]* He's the batboy of the Chicago Cubs."

When the only celebrities one really longs to meet are no longer alive, it is a sign that one is growing old. I would love to have met Babe Ruth, but I could pass on meeting just about any major-league ballplayer of the current day. Someone told me the other day that he went to see Wayne Gretzky play before his retirement. I can understand that—Gretzky may be the greatest hockey player in the history of the game. But I long to meet Gretzky,

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my guess is, roughly to the extent that he longs to meet me. I should have liked to lunch with Fredric March or Myrna Loy (whom I actually did once meet, if I may be allowed a little name-dropping), but I shall leave the planet with the same equanimity with which I arrived if I never meet Barbra Streisand or Al Pacino.

Had I known him, I would have dropped Fred Astaire's name, and dropped it often, with the exquisite, happy confidence that it would have gotten the attention of most people. "What you have just said reminds me of something Fred Astaire once told me," I might have inserted into conversation. Or: "Fred—Fred Astaire, that is—would probably agree with what you just said." Or, a forced drop: "Apropos of nothing, Fred Astaire always used to say . . . "

I like to think that Fred Astaire in person had a natural elegance of the kind he demonstrated in all his movies. I assume he wore wonderful loafers and socks of some astonishingly subtle color, suitable raiment for the world's most deserving feet. Had I met him, he would have put me immediately at ease. He'd have been kind to the waiter. He'd have ordered something light and wonderfully simple, a chicken sandwich on white toast, perhaps, and a split of champagne. His talk, though witty, would have been radiant with common sense but would not touch on politics. "My politics," he would have said, "are let Paris be gay, in the old sense, of course. Say, how about another glass of champagne, kiddo?" After ninety minutes or so of dazzling talk—filled with charming anecdotes told with a pleasing and altogether benign irony and at appropriate intervals touching on the profound—he would have graciously allowed me to pick up the check. "Fred, my pleasure and small recompense for all the enjoyment you have given me over the years," I'd have said. "We'll do it again, kiddo," he'd have said, putting on his hat outside the restaurant, shaking my hand, and going off in a jaunty walk that seemed awfully close to a dance.

The first place I'd have dropped Fred Astaire's name would have been in my journal, where over the years I have made a number of private drops. One of the reasons I read other people's published journals and diaries is to be let in on this game of private name-dropping. My own, in this regard, is rather thin. On even a quick spin through *In the Twenties,* the one-volume diary of the German publisher Harry Kessler, one gets a true taste of what serious name-dropping looks like. "Lunched with Jean Cocteau. . . . To tea with Albert Einstein. . . . Visited Frau Foerster-Nietzsche. . . . In the morning a discussion with Ramsay MacDonald in his room at the Commons. . . . Mrs. Harold Nicolson, Virginia Woolf and her husband, Leonard Woolf, came to tea. . . . After lunch I drove him [Maillol] to Marly and then visited Paul Valéry. . . ."

Count Kessler's little visit to Valéry is to the point here. The purpose of the visit was to invite Valéry to do a translation of Virgil's *Georgics,* which Valéry chose not to do, claiming he knew nothing about agriculture. So ignorant of it was he that, would you believe, Mallarmé once had to explain to him what corn is. An eye for an eye, a name-drop for a name-drop—here is Paul Valéry, an eminently droppable name himself, dropping the name of Mallarmé in conversation with Count Kessler, who will duly record it in his diary and thus obtain two drops for the price of one.

This little incident also brings up the question—the problem, really—of whose names the truly famous get to drop. What names did Vladimir Horowitz, Samuel Beckett, or Bing Crosby—all handsomely droppable names—get to drop? Most of their dropping had to be in the past tense: great people they once knew. In a television interview, Horowitz—how I wish I could refer to him as Volodya—dropped the names of Rachmaninoff and Scriabin. "I first met Yeats in 1934," Beckett told Robert Craft. I suppose Crosby must have dropped the names of long-dead bandleaders or, possibly, deceased professional golfers.

The celebrated, even the mildly celebrated, do at least get to drop their own names, and some learn to do so artfully and in a way that gets a response. I went to a basketball game a while back with a movie reviewer who has a national television show, and dinner was planned after the game. From his car phone, he called a restaurant, and even before asking if it were open for a late dinner he announced his name, which clearly got the manager's attention. The restaurant, it turned

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out, was closing, for which the manager all but apologized, and he asked the movie reviewer to please try the restaurant again. This anecdote reinforces a story told in the last AMERICAN SCHOLAR's letters column about Ira Gershwin failing to get a table in a popular restaurant but his friend's succeeding because he told the maître d' that his name was Ira Gershwin. What's in a name? At the very least, it would seem, a good table.

Eccentric behavior, or simple oddity, combined with genuine talent is one way to get one's name dropped. W. H. Auden furnishes the best example here. Everyone who has ever met Auden seems to have at least two stories about him. He is a diarist's delight, a name-dropper's dream. With his rumpled clothes, his drinking habits (martinis before dinner, wine during, whiskey after), his odd footwear, above all his comic, often amusingly catty, remarks, Auden ("Wystan," alas, not to me) comes near to stealing the show in Robert Craft's diary, *Stravinsky: Chronicle of a Friendship, 1948–1971.* "Wystan Auden for dinner in the I.S.' suite. Besides the glittering jewels of his intellect, he wears a dark brown flannel shirt, black necktie, wicker beach shoes, and—on departure, shortly before midnight—very dark glasses, like a jazz musician." When asked that evening if he believes in capital punishment, Auden replied: "Well, there have been people on whom I can picture it being carried out. Brecht, for one. In fact, I can imagine doing it to him myself. . . . Still, you must admire the logic of a man who lives in a Communist country, takes out Austrian citizenship, does his banking in Switzerland, and, like a gambler hedging his bets, sends for the pastor at the end in the event there could be something in that, too."

Here we get not only the good names of Wystan and Bert (if I may, and since both are dead, who is to stop me?), but also an extra little fillip of gossip. It is pleasing to know that Auden had a correctly low opinion of Brecht. But then name-dropping and gossip have always been sister arts. For those of us who have become a bit jaded, the sweet tintinnabulation provided by a good name is no longer sufficient without a touch of gossip attached to it. The dirt, the lowdown, the true gen about the famous—now here is something with which one can work.

The true professional name-droppers have always been the gossip columnists. Walter Winchell, Leonard Lyons, Earl Wilson, and others brought the two—name-dropping and gossip—together to high perfection in New York as did Hedda Hopper and Louella Parsons in Los Angeles. In Chicago, a man named Irv Kupcinet had the reigning gossip column when I was a boy. "Kup's Column," as it was called and still is nearly fifty years later, set out names from show business, politics, and sports in boldface type. After the sports section, Kup was the first thing I turned to in the Chicago *Sun-Times.* The astonishing thing about this column was that it dished very little dirt and contained no malice whatsoever. One would drop one's eyes down the column in search of interesting names—Ginger Rogers, Sinatra, the Deans Acheson or Martin or Rusk, Sid Luckman, Harry Belafonte, Adlai Stevenson, Zsa Zsa Gabor—next to which one would find some quite useless tidbit of information. Why a fourteen-year-old boy needed to know that "Ole Blue Eyes" (one of Kup's cliché names for Sinatra) was thinking of canceling his forthcoming engagement at the Riviera Hotel in Las Vegas I cannot explain, except to ascribe it all to the magic inherent in famous names. Somehow it gave comfort. Zsa Zsa is about to take another husband, and all's right with the world.

None of the Mesdemoiselles Gabor is present in the bountiful index of *Remembering My Good Friends,* the autobiography of the Austrian-born English publisher George Weidenfeld, but almost everyone else is. Mr. Weidenfeld is celebrated, I think it fair to say, for being friends with the celebrated. His book is a nearly five-hundred-page "Kup's Column," but without the boldface type and with a much higher quality set of names. I read it with breathless avidity.

The Gabors may be a bit de trop for Mr. Weidenfeld. His international name-dropping runs from the socially prominent to the intellectually distinguished to the plain bloody rich, from the Agnellis to Bernard Berenson to David Ben-Gurion to Oscar de la Renta to Yukio Mishima to Picasso to the Rothschilds to the Whitneys to Lord Solly Zuckerman. Fame provides the water in which Mr. Weidenfeld most happily swims, and he has managed to stay joyously afloat, as one

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reviewer of his book has it, on four different continents.

Buying a house, Mr. Weidenfeld has to tell about its well-known previous occupants. He takes the social weight of any room he enters. "Loelia, Duchess of Westminster, whom I had met through Grace Radziwill, invited me to join her for Christmas at Russborough, the palatial house of South African financier and philanthropist Sir Alfred Beit and his wife Clementine, a cousin of Nancy Mitford." That trailer, "a cousin of Nancy Mitford," is the tip-off, if any be needed, that Mr. Weidenfeld is able to squeeze all the juice possible out of any name he drops. "For years," he notes, "I tried to persuade Herbert von Karajan to write his memoirs." That "for years" suggests a long acquaintance and hence an intimacy. Mr. Weidenfeld, one suspects, makes his own intimacy; wherever the famous gather, there precisely is he at home.

I not long ago had occasion to be introduced to George Weidenfeld, whose name I hope he won't mind my dropping. It was at a dinner attended by a fairly large number of writers, intellectuals, and politicians, some mildly famous. As he heard my name, I could see him quickly run it through his own personal social register and I noted that it didn't click for him. The happy anticipation in his eyes faded. Ping! Ping!—where two eyeballs once were, two small *x*'s were now, for the lights went out in his mind. Without further word he ambled off, hunter after bigger game. Quite right, too.

I may seem to mock George Weidenfeld—Lord Weidenfeld as he now is—but that doesn't mean that I don't also admire him. I admire his knowing what makes him happy and going out to get it without any false hesitation. He is not without courage; he takes political positions; he is not above criticizing the famous; he does not truckle; he is no sycophant. I admire, too, his consistency. A man who acts true to type is a fine thing. George Weidenfeld is a type, a pure and beautiful type, a man who has made himself fit for Proustian portraiture, which, in our non-Proustian days, is no small achievement.

At the same dinner at which I met and didn't register with George Weidenfeld, I was seated next to a woman whose speciality seemed to be not name- but place-, or educational-institution-dropping. Whenever she mentioned anyone to me, she would always give that person's, so to say, institutional affiliation. "My daughter, who is at Princeton," she would say. Or, "My son-in-law, whom my other daughter first met at Oxford . . ." "My nephew, who is now at the Yale Medical School . . . " Everyone she knew seemed to be at or to have been recently released from some absolutely OK college or university. "Daddy was at Leavenworth," I wanted to say to her, "and Mum, Mum was of course at Bellevue."

I remember a rather brittle period when the children of my contemporaries were about to enter college. At certain times, one felt as if one were in a high-status bridge game, with prestige-laden schools as trumps: Yale, Harvard, Princeton, Brown, Stanford, Berkeley, Duke—the cards slapped down on the table. A mug's game, but everyone holding a strong hand felt he had to play.

This is the sort of thing that has given name-dropping a bad name, and it's a pity, for there is a positive side to name-dropping. Famous people on occasion are extraordinary; their achievements, if genuine, can give them an extra dimension. Fame, along with sometimes serving as an aphrodisiac, has its own intrinsic fascination. In a room with a famous person, one is inclined to feel a bit of added electricity in the air. If the famous person isn't a dolt, creep, or *schmegge*, one is also inclined to feel a bit elevated by his fame.

At a party in an extraordinary restaurant in Oak Park, Illinois, a beautiful, large whitefish was dedicated by the chef to Pierre Boulez and to me. The chef, gracious man, announced that he was carving and cooking this fish in honor of two artists, Pierre Boulez and Nikolai Aristides. So you are reading a man who has shared dedication of a whitefish with Pierre Boulez. The only thing I have to report about M. Boulez is that he is delightfully old-shoe, everything you would expect a contemporary avant-garde artist *not* to be: kindly, sweet-tempered, a swell guy. I justify my name-drop to myself by saying that Pierre Boulez's good nature is something worth reporting.

Had he turned out to be unpleasant, would I have told stories, if not in print at least to friends, about his unpleasantness? Probably. Boulez's fame, I suspect, would

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have held my audience's attention. Certainly more so than if I announced that I met this guy last week, I don't know what line of work he's in, but what a jerk he turned out to be.

Besides, Pierre Boulez's seems a nice name to drop; it has something of the equivalent feel of quoting Paul Valéry in an essay—something understated and Frenchly elegant about it. As drops go, it has the correct feel, the right weight. Nothing blatant about it, unlike Ned Rorem's drops in his *Nantucket Diary*, where he boasts of having slept with four *Time* cover subjects.

On the other hand, why not let my casual and pleasant meeting with Pierre Boulez go unremarked? Wouldn't it be much nicer to be known as a man who knows all sorts of famous and grand people but feels no need to advertise the fact? It would, but I cannot always do it. I seem to be a man who lives to tell, which is certainly one—if not the only or most noble—definition of a writer.

Having met someone famous whom I admire, I am somewhat in the condition of the man in the joke cast adrift on a small island with a famous model. One thing leading to another, before long the two begin sleeping together. After a few weeks, the man asks the woman if she would mind putting on a pair of his jeans, one of his shirts, and his baseball cap. When she does so, he suggests a walk around the island. He then asks her if she would mind if he called her, just for now, Bruce. When she says not at all, he turns to her and announces: "Bruce, you'll never guess whom I'm sleeping with!"

Highly conscious of the human weakness known as name-dropping, I hope not to overdo it. I attempt restraint. I sometimes tell what I think is a fine joke about how artists lie about crowds, royalties, fees, and almost everything else having to do with worldly success. When the joke receives a kindly response, I want to say that it was told to me by Robert Stack, but more often than not I hold back doing so, lest I be thought to ruin a nice story with the stain of name-dropping. Sorry, Bob, no acknowledgment, not even a footnote.

Behind much name-dropping is a desire for distinction. Look, the name-dropper implies with each fresh drop, I am distinguished, at least by association. If this were not so, why would all these senators, movie stars, athletes, artists, and the rest put up with my company? The desire to be taken for distinguished seems all but universal. Robert Mapplethorpe, who, one would have thought, had plainly thumbed his nose at society, confided sadly to his biographer shortly before his death that he wouldn't be alive to "reap the benefits of his celebrity."

Ancestor worship is another form of attaining distinction through association, and dropping the names of one's own famous relatives, even if they are still alive, can provide its own comforts and comedy. I was not long ago at a dinner with a man named Milton Himmelfarb, a writer on Jewish subjects who will always be honored by me for once writing that—I paraphrase—the Jews are the only people who live like Republicans and vote like Puerto Ricans. Someone introduced Mr. Himmelfarb as the brother of the historian Gertrude Himmelfarb. "No, no, no," he said. "Actually, I now think of myself as the uncle of William Kristol," the young Republican Party intellectual who at that moment was getting a vast amount of publicity.

Of course, if one could only be certain of one's own distinction, the whole matter of name-dropping might never arise in the first place. I hope someone will let me know if I ever arrive at being distinguished, so that I can knock off all this nonsense. Am I, I ask myself, anywhere near close? I keep turning out books. I have friends in what are known as high places. I know a Nobel Prize chappie or two. Publishers ask me to drop my own name on the backs of other people's books in the form of blurbs. I am asked, in other words, to drop my own name, if only in ink. What does it add up to? Not enough, I fear. But if I were ever to become a name, don't, please don't, hesitate to drop me.

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Adventures in Wonderland

A Scholar in Washington

DIANE RAVITCH

I GUESS I WAS READY WHEN THE CALL CAME. Although hard at work on a new book, I felt the stirrings of a vague kind of restlessness, the sort that used to draw people in other times to go to sea, join the circus, or hit the road. The call came from Lamar Alexander, former governor of Tennessee and recently appointed by President Bush to be Secretary of Education. He invited me to come to Washington and tell him what I thought he should do. To those of us who spend our hours hoping to speak truth to power, never quite sure whether anyone is listening, the invitation was irresistible.

At lunch a week later, Alexander and his deputy, David Kearns, former chairman of Xerox, listened to me intently on the subject of education (later they told me they couldn't get a word in edgewise). A few days later, Alexander asked me to join his team. We would start a crusade to improve education, he said, and my assignment would be to put the topic of standards high on the nation's agenda.

Despite my aforementioned restlessness, I truly didn't want to do it; I liked working at home in jeans and didn't want to feel compelled to go to an office every day. As a writer and academic, I had never had to mouth anyone else's opinions or defer to any party line; besides, I was a lifelong Democrat. But Alexander said to me, "Sometimes in your life, the right combination of people, ideas, and opportunities come together. And when it happens, you have to take a chance." I heard the music begin to swell in the background, and my brain seemed flooded with clichés about seizing the day, daring greatly, entering the arena, and all that. I believed it. In July 1991, I was sworn into office as Assistant Secretary in the U.S. Department of Educa-

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tion, in charge of the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI), and Counselor to the Secretary.

Eighteen months later, I was the last person left at the Education Department, the official who turned over the metaphorical keys to the incoming Clinton administration on January 21, 1993. I sat in the Secretary's empty office, Acting Secretary for the day. My one substantive (and humiliating) task was to sign letters to approximately 150 of my former colleagues, informing them that their services were no longer required by the Department.

Since I left government, I have often thought about what I learned while I was there. I have occasionally recalled a brief conversation with James Pinkerton, a young domestic policy adviser on President Bush's staff, at a Christmas party in 1991. I was still finding my way around Washington when, upon meeting Pinkerton, he said to me, "It's a good thing that you are here, because you have to write about it later. You have to let people know what really happens." I wondered why he thought I might have any special insight into "what really happens," but I later realized what he meant. Most people who work in the federal government become socialized to the status quo; they accept the way things work because, so far as they know, it has always been that way and it will always be that way. Pinkerton recognized that I brought to Washington an outsider's perspective: I was constantly amazed or angered by the ways things worked. Fortunately—I at least think it fortunate—I left before I lost my capacity for outrage.

What I learned in Washington can be distilled into eight basic and interrelated axioms:

First: The United States has two dream factories—Hollywood and Washington, D.C. Both of them feed the fantasies of the American public by encouraging people to believe that intractable, deep-rooted problems (and even their psychological needs) will be solved by a magic feather or a new program.

Second: The federal government is run by Congress, especially by the House of Representatives, which controls the budget and decides how much money will be spent, who will receive it, and what they may or may not spend it on.

Third: Those who work inside the Beltway in Washington, D.C., believe that they are smarter than everyone outside the Beltway because they have the power to write the laws and regulations that everyone else in the country has to obey.

Fourth: There is one sure way to achieve eternal life: Become a federal program. Many programs administered by the Department of Education long ago outlived their usefulness, but they continue to receive appropriations year after year, protected by friends in

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Congress. Most programs are seldom evaluated; on the odd occasion when a program gets a negative evaluation, its friends respond that it needs more money and more time.

Fifth: All federal education programs are designed by lobbyists employed by education interest groups. Congressional staff members rely on them because they are presumed to know much more about the issues and problems than anyone else, and they know exactly who should get the federal dollars (their clients). The nation's children do not have lobbyists, but many organizations representing publishers, unions, teachers, principals, school superintendents, counselors, gender-equity trainers, trade schools, universities, and school boards do. Because these lobbyists represent mostly nonprofit associations, the media assume that they are above self-interest. If they were corporate lobbyists, the media would watch them closely. But lobbyists are lobbyists, and the same principle obtains: Follow the money.

Sixth: Euphemisms disguise purposes. A tax was called a "revenue enhancement"; a bill meant to funnel hundreds of millions of dollars to state education departments was titled "the neighborhood schools improvement act." See above: Follow the money.

Seventh: Anything worth funding is worth funding in several different federal agencies at the same time. I spent countless hours meeting with counterparts who were running similar or identical programs in other offices within the Department of Education, as well as in the Department of Commerce, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Energy, the National Science Foundation, and other federal agencies. In one area alone—mathematics and science education—there are programs in seventeen different federal agencies, expending more than $2 billion annually. There is no logic to this duplication, nor is there any real capacity for coordination; a recipient of federal largesse, found incompetent by one agency, will sometimes succeed in wheedling money from a different agency, unaware of the applicant's previous failure.

Eighth: The federal government will never be the leading edge of educational reform because political considerations make it impossible either to reject bad programs or to recognize good programs. Federal programs work best when distributing money based on need because it is easy to measure whether everyone got what they were entitled to (regardless of the quality of education they support). Federal programs work worst when any judgment about their quality or effectiveness is required because politics gets in the way of making such judgments.

Lest I sound too cynical, let me assure the reader that working in

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government as a sub-cabinet officer was one of the most exciting experiences of my life. Despite some bad days when I wondered what I was doing there, I loved the glamour and political drama of working in Washington; I also felt pride in doing public service, no matter how often I wondered about how well the public was served. There was never a humdrum day.

One of the joys of my job was visiting exemplary schools around the country, where enthusiastic teachers and principals showed what dedication could accomplish. I will never forget, for example, San Francisco's Mission High School, where inner-city children were solving difficult math problems based on Edgar Allan Poe's "The Pit and the Pendulum"; or the Wesley Elementary School in Houston, where first graders, who were mainly poor and black, demonstrated a command of English grammar that was better than many graduate students that I had taught; or an innovative elementary school in Tucson that had a planetarium in unused office space, a student bank in another room, and a nature trail and garden in the front yard.

Once in a while, I could even quietly claim credit for stopping something from happening. I recall, for example, that the Department's Office of Civil Rights proudly displayed a banner that it intended to distribute to every school in the country. It said, "Sticks and stones will break my bones, and words will surely hurt me." No, I said, no. Don't do that. That message from the federal government will unleash an avalanche of speech codes and inspire everyone to claim victim status, based on any thoughtless comment. Besides, my generation grew up saying, "Sticks and stones will break my bones, but words can never hurt me." Isn't that what we want kids to say when faced with taunts and bullies? Doesn't a free society, with words coming from all directions, require a thickening of everyone's skin? I don't know if my criticism alone stopped it—perhaps others reacted the same way—but the banner was never reproduced.

Learning about the culture of the federal government was, of course, a revelation. Even before I was sworn in, I encountered the ethics rules. Despite the popular perception, the rules for the executive branch—when observed—are rigorous. I was surprised to hear Bill Clinton say during the 1992 campaign that his administration would be the most ethical ever, as if he were wading into a swamp of misbehavior, because the ethics rules for senior political appointees were already very strict. As a Presidential appointee, I was told that I must resign from every organization that I belonged to and also recuse myself from any relationship with any organization in which I had participated during the previous five years. Every source of my income had to be revealed and was carefully scrutinized by the

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Department's ethics lawyers. I resigned my memberships in various professional associations, and I sold my one hundred shares of Time Warner stock (because the Department made decisions affecting textbook publishers and educational technology). Furthermore, I was not permitted to accept any gifts, or to allow anyone to pick up the check for a meal, or to keep the frequent-flyer miles accrued while traveling on government business (the previous Secretary of Education was then under investigation for allegedly using frequent-flyer miles earned on government travel). Nor could I receive payment for speaking or writing, even if the subject had nothing to do with my official duties. The only outside income that I could legally accept (other than dividends and interest) was royalties from books.

And each year, I would be expected to fill out a new financial disclosure form. At first, I thought that the ethics rules were unduly restrictive (why not allow a journalist to buy lunch?), but I came to believe that they are, in fact, reasonable and fair. Federal officials make decisions that affect the allocation of millions of dollars, and they should not receive gratuities that might influence their judgment. Besides which, Washington is chock-full of lobbyists who, if they saw an opening, would quickly rush in bearing gifts and favors.

It did gall me that neither members of Congress nor their staffs lived by the same ethics rules that govern executive branch officers. People "on the Hill" sought any opening to criticize members of the administration on ethics issues, but they themselves were free to accept money (campaign contributions), meals, vacations, and gifts from lobbyists. I never understood why the press tolerated this blatant double standard.

Although there were no perks, life in the executive suite had its compensations. Unlike some other cabinet offices, the Department of Education did not have a dining room or a chef, nor was there ever a free lunch; when we had a weekly luncheon meeting, each of us paid seven dollars for a box lunch. The Secretary and Deputy Secretary had a driver and limousine; assistant secretaries called for a pool car when traveling on official business. However, I did have a grand office with a full view of the Capitol and a large personal staff. And I had a free parking space in the garage of my agency's building. When I took office, my immediate entourage included a deputy, a chief of staff, two speechwriters, personal assistants, secretaries, and policy analysts. Never having had more than a part-time research assistant, I was not sure what to do with all those people, but they seemed to know what to do and kept doing it. I couldn't get used to having speechwriters, so I reassigned them and stayed up into the pre-dawn hours drafting my own speeches, which is practically unheard of.

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The agency that I ran, OERI, had some five hundred employees and a budget of about $450 million. The most valuable part of the agency is the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), which collects statistics about education; it is well respected for its professionalism. NCES includes the National Assessment of Educational Progress, which regularly tests national samples of American students and supplies the most useful information that we have about student achievement. The statistical agency represents the historic root of the federal role in education, created in 1867 to report to the American people on the condition and progress of education. OERI was also in charge of research centers, library programs, dissemination of public information about research and practice, and dozens of miscellaneous small programs related to teacher education, technology, gifted children, civic education, drug education, school health, teacher training in the South Pacific, and so on.

When I discovered that so many small programs were assigned to OERI, my first impulse was to ask, "Why is the federal government doing this? Who does it help? Does it make a difference?" I told OERI staff to ask these questions before they sent up proposals for funding. In short order I learned that there was no money to evaluate programs that Congress had authorized and funded for years; the career staff knew that I could raise questions but could not cut off funding to programs, regardless of their quality. Each year the administration tried to "zero out" many of them, but it was a waste of time. Almost every program had a lobbyist, a bevy of nonprofit groups that received federal funding and lobbied for more, and a Congressional friend. The lobbyist for the education research groups told me that his ambition was to have Congress view educational researchers just like tobacco farmers, protected in the federal budget each year by their friends.

A major part of the agency's budget was devoted to nearly a score of relatively small university-based research centers and ten "regional education laboratories." The centers and labs, as they were known, constituted the heart of the Department's modest commitment to education research and development. Created during the Great Society years, the centers and labs were supposed to herald a new day in American education, as researchers unlocked the secrets of learning and shared their wealth with the nation's schools. That never happened, of course, and there was widespread feeling in Washington that education research had been a dismal failure.

Education researchers believed, with some justification, that the failure was owing to a lack of federal funding; a report published by the National Academy of Sciences during my term in office recom-

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mended a vast increase in federal spending on education research. But research funding dried up for two reasons: first, because the Democratic majority in Congress never trusted a Republican administration with control of the education research agenda; and second, because many members of both parties were deeply suspicious of the value of any education research, believing that the field mainly produced useless gobbledygook (sometimes they were right).

The regional education laboratories were a special puzzlement. When I first arrived in Washington, I was not quite sure what they were; living in New York City, I had never seen or heard of "our" regional laboratory, which is in Amherst, Massachusetts. I soon learned that their presence may be slight or invisible in the nation's urban schools but is felt very strongly on Capitol Hill. I was told by Democratic and Republican staff members alike not to tangle with them because they were politically powerful, far more powerful than a mere assistant secretary. That I administered their funds, I was told, should not give me the idea that I had anything to say about their operations or budget. Each regional lab covers several states and has a board that includes important public figures. Together they receive about $50 million in federal funds each year.

The labs maintained a lobbying organization in Washington that was run by an energetic woman who had previously worked for a senior Democrat on the House Appropriations Committee. The labs also had powerful friends in the Senate, including Republican Senator Mark Hatfield, who has a lab in his state. Each year, at appropriations time, the labs' funding was guaranteed, but the rest of OERI's budget was not. In fact, I found myself courting the labs' lobbyist, trying to get her to intercede on behalf of the rest of the agency's budget. A waste of time, I might add; the labs never did anything for any other part of the agency and fought fiercely only to enhance their own budgets.

Like other federal programs, the labs were always on the lookout for new pots of money, and it was easy to spot their thumbprints on new education proposals. If the appropriation bill said that the funds were to be awarded to ten regional competitors, everyone knew that the money was intended for the labs. For example, when Senator Hatfield decided that the nation needed ten regional mathematics and science centers ($12 million annually for the lot), a national competition was conducted, and—surprise!—the labs won all ten contracts. Republican Senator Nancy Kassebaum's education staff assistant was greatly enamored of the labs, and she decided that the labs should receive an additional $30 million annually to train classroom teachers as education researchers. I argued that classroom

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teachers belonged in the classroom, that the federal government should not promote an exodus of the most talented teachers, that there were many other agencies better qualified to train new researchers, but there was no dissuading her. She wanted the labs to get more money for this vital federal mission. And into the OERI budget went another plum earmarked for the labs.

On one of my visits outside Washington, I saw a state (not federal) education lab in Harris County, Texas, that was very impressive. It sold its services to about fifty local school districts and to the state education department, and it was very entrepreneurial in supplying what districts wanted, including teacher training (about two hundred different courses, beamed out over its own local cable stations); computerized payroll services and student records; a lending library of educational videos; machines that translated textbooks into braille; and a showroom with the most advanced electronic communications devices for children with handicaps. This lab actively competed for state and federal contracts. I thought it was a model of what an educational laboratory might be, a service provider, doing the work that school districts and the state wanted done, rather than an organization that uses political connections to remain permanently on the federal dole. I urged the federal labs to think about transforming themselves into similar entrepreneurial organizations. Needless to say, the lab directors and their lobbyists did not appreciate the suggestion.

My encounters with Congress were frequently disheartening and sometimes painful. The senators and their staffs were always cordial and straightforward, even to a representative of the Bush administration, in part because of their courtly tradition but also perhaps because they had occasionally been out of power. They actually seemed to believe that the elected administration should have some role in managing the Department. I had only one startling encounter with a Democratic staffer from the Senate, a man who was customarily nonpartisan. Both of us were invited to address a gathering of the teachers and principals of the year on the subject of the federal role in education. I discussed the national education goals and the importance of establishing standards. He gave a stemwinder, flailing at the Republicans and listing the multi-million-dollar programs that Congress had authorized for principals, school boards, teachers, schools of education, and other deserving recipients. The only problem was that most of the programs he described had not received a penny of appropriations; nor were they likely to. The promised programs, in short, were nonexistent. The speaker correctly assumed that his listeners would not know that federal programs receive authorization

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from one Congressional committee, and appropriations from another committee, and that programs can be authorized without receiving appropriations. I was dumbfounded, but realized that this behavior, this indulgent expenditure of promises and empty rhetoric, was part of the political game, engaged in by all sides.

Dealing with House members and their staffs was a constant ordeal; the majority had been in power continuously for forty years, and they—especially their staffs—exhibited the arrogance of uncontested power. Exchanges with them often made me feel like a freshman undergoing a hazing ritual. I was taken aback by their intense partisanship. They were especially enraged at the thought that President Bush wanted to be "the education President," a prospect that brought sneers and a determination to block anything that the Department proposed. The attitude of House members was that they (and they alone) decided every educational issue and the Department did their bidding; under no circumstances was the Department to have a program that did not emanate from the Democratic majority in Congress. So, for example, when Secretary Alexander awarded competitive grants for teacher-training academies in subject areas (math, science, history, English, geography) without asking for permission first, the House Education and Labor Committee punished the Department by cutting millions of dollars in discretionary funds. This activity, they said, was unauthorized by Congress and amounted to "politicization" (anything that they didn't like was characterized as "politicization," but nothing that they themselves did—like directing federal funds to their favorite causes or harassing administration officials—ever amounted to "politicization").

My agency was "up for reauthorization," meaning that Congress was about to rewrite its charter for the next five years, and House Democrats had decided to reconstruct it. One Congressman, whom I will call Mr. X, headed an oversight committee of one and held the fate of the agency in his hands. Since the agency was his baby, he had grandiose plans for its future. Mr. X had no use for Republicans, and he devised a plan to assure that the administration would have little to say about the education research agenda in the future (actually, the administration had little to say about the research agenda even before reauthorization, because Congress closely circumscribed the uses of research monies and scrutinized every funding decision made by OERI). Mr. X asserted that the agency had a "treasure chest" of knowledge about how to fix the nation's schools and he wanted to make it available to everyone. In his redesign, the agency would be authorized to expend billions of dollars through major research institutes; it would have an extensive network of federal extension agents

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(like agricultural extension agents) who would bring the latest research findings into inner-city schools; and it would be controlled by a powerful policy-making board that consisted mainly of representatives from organizations that received or sought money from the agency.

I knew that the agency was not suppressing knowledge about educational regeneration and that it lacked the capacity to staff the research institutes that Mr. X projected; I also disagreed with his proposal to create a powerful board with extensive executive authority (including the authority to conduct research and run conferences, just like the agency) and its own large staff. But there was no shaking the Congressman's conviction that the only way to "depoliticize" the agency was to turn control over to the people and organizations that compete for its funding. He called it "a new paradigm."

I spent many hours visiting members of Congress, trying to find support for an advisory board of distinguished people who—unlike Congressman X's board—would not have the power to select personnel or to intervene in grant-making decisions. Since no one in Congress cared much about education research, it was hard to stir up interest. And I became utterly hopeless when I met with the most important education staff member in the Congress, a twenty-five-year veteran of the House Education and Labor Committee. It was, in fact, the worst single hour of my time in the federal government. In his quiet, assured way, he told me that no one in the majority was interested in what the administration wanted; that all decisions about education policy in general, and my agency in particular, would be made by the Committee, meaning the Democratic majority. As I listened to him, I wondered what I was doing in Washington. He made me feel entirely ineffectual, as was, doubtless, his intention.

During my time in Washington, Congressman X's legislation never came to a vote, because of opposition from the Senate Democratic staff, who thought it was irresponsible. Mr. X concluded that I was to blame (I was flattered that he thought I could influence the actions of the Senate). For my intransigence, I was rewarded with hostile and persistent scrutiny by Mr. X's staff. There are no secrets inside federal agencies because Congressional staff have friendly contacts within the bureaucracy, no matter who is in power. When a contract for $1500 went to an education researcher named Laurie Alexander, there were immediate inquiries from Congressman X's staff about her possible relationship to the Secretary or to my deputy, who had the same last name (there was none). When I hired a hotel room (for $425) for an agency-wide meeting, with free homemade peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, there were threats of a Congressional investigation for

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misuse of government funds. In mid–1992, as he grew increasingly frustrated by his inability to pass his legislative reorganization of OERI, Mr. X requested a list of every contract, grant, cooperative agreement, and purchase order for the past year. We sent the list. Then he requested the same information for 1990 and 1991. Then he requested specific details of every proposal that did not get funded, reviewers' comments, and resumés of reviewers—literally thousands of pages. It was a fishing expedition, intended to harass the agency, at a huge cost in staff time and taxpayers' dollars. After the election, my successor hired the Congressman's legislative aide, which undoubtedly improved relations with him. The agency was reauthorized in the fall of 1994, and early in 1995 President Clinton appointed its new policy-making board, which included members whose organizations are funded by OERI.

About the bureaucracy, I continue to have mixed feelings. Many of the career employees worked very hard and very effectively; the leaders of the agency included people who were as smart and capable as anyone I had met in private life. Some are now my friends. The able members of the career staff were usually as frustrated as I. When I asked two of the best agency research experts to offer suggestions for the redesign of the federal government's major program to help disadvantaged youngsters, they submitted a first-rate plan, targeting more money to the poorest districts, but told me that it had not a chance of being considered by Congress because it would not pass muster politically. They were right. There were also highly paid employees (in the salary range from $80,000 to $110,000 annually) who did nothing at all, ever, and it was impossible either to remove them or to get them to do any work. One person ran a business in his spare time, very possibly on the job when no one was watching. There was a malingerer who claimed to suffer from a syndrome that required him to have an office with a window (a rarity in our agency); apparently his syndrome also prevented him from doing any useful work, because he spent most of his time filing grievances and writing a scurrilous union newsletter. Among the malingerers was a high-ranking civil servant who was noted for his distinctive lack of personal hygiene: according to his supervisor, he didn't wash or wear underwear or socks (he also didn't work). And there were two or three members of the Senior Executive Service, the highest level in the Civil Service, who were biding their time, waiting for a lucrative buyout offer, pretending to work, but doing as little as possible.

Among the 500 or so employees in OERI, about 130 worked for the National Center for Education Statistics, which collects data and regularly issues reports on the condition of American education; of

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the remainder, there were perhaps thirty who could be considered education researchers (many of them worked as administrators, not researchers). Consequently, the agency lacked the capacity either to conduct the kind of major research projects that one would expect from the federal government or even to monitor the quality of the research that it funded. Most employees were civil servants who had worked for many years in the federal government. They included clerks, secretaries, and grant administrators, who had no particular qualifications to assess the quality of research or to design new education programs. The agency badly needed competent researchers to evaluate the work of the labs and centers and other research activities. But there were no job slots available, and the timeservers held on, waiting for the buyout offer (which they eventually received).

As head of OERI, I tried to emphasize quality and publications. I rejected sloppy reports and on several occasions withheld funding (at least temporarily) from projects whose leaders were unable to explain their work in plain English; some tried to improve, but others went to their Congressman to demand a restoration of their funding. During my brief time in office, the agency produced a steady stream of publications whose purpose was to demystify education research, including a series of brief "consumer guides" explaining research findings, booklets for parents who wanted to help their children, and a historical summary of statistics about education. My deputy Francie Alexander (who was not related to the Secretary or anyone else in the Department) made publications her priority. Achieving this level of productivity required constant pressure and nagging, because the agency was accustomed to moving at a snail's pace. I discovered on many occasions, especially after President Bush sank low in the polls, that the bureaucracy had the power to block appointments of new personnel as well as to stop publications that it did not like (such as a report on research about single-sex education and a report on school choice in Eastern Europe, neither of which ever appeared despite many months in the pipeline).

Within any bureaucracy, the English language is always in peril, because the temptation is irresistible to replace words with acronyms and initials, whose usage not only saves time but connotes a certain *savoir dire.* The newcomer requires an initiation period to learn how to communicate with others in the organization. OERI was a POC ("principal operating component," pronounced "pock"), and I—I discovered to my alarm—was a "POC-head." Insiders never referred to a program by its official name, which was usually unwieldy. The agency's main divisions were NCES, OR (the Office of Research), PIP (Programs for Improvement of Practice), and FIRST (Fund for the

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Improvement and Reform of Schools and Teaching). There was also FIE (the Fund for the Improvement of Education), NDN (the National Diffusion Network), and ERIC (a retrieval system for education information). NCES maintained databases such as IPEDS, SASS, NELS: 88, and CCD, and student surveys such as NAEP, SIMMS, and TIMMS. NAEP (pronounced "nape") had a policy board called NAGB (pronounced "nag-b"). The Department's regional laboratories and centers contributed such acronyms as SERVE, SEDL (pronounced "seedle"), CPRE (pronounced "see-pre"), McREL, SWERL, and NCREL (pronounced "N-crel"); the labs' lobbyist was CEDAR. The Department's bible of regulations was EDGAR. The other agencies of the Department had their own acronymic titles, including the IG, OBEMLA, OVAE, OSERS, and OCR.

It took several months to master the new language so that I too could converse in bureaucratic jargon, acronyms, and numbers (usually representing pending legislation). With practice, I could say, the words tripping lightly off my tongue, "OERI signed an MOU with NSF," meaning that our agency signed a memorandum of understanding with the National Science Foundation. As a representative of the Department, I went to meetings of FCCSET (pronounced "fix-it") at OEOB, also to international meetings of CERI at OECD. And beyond acronyms and initialized titles, there was the lingo of the politicians. One warned colleagues of a pending problem by saying, "I am going to give you a heads-up." And one referred to an ally on Capitol Hill who was trying to win support for the Department's agenda by saying, "He is carrying our water."

One of the agency's continuing responsibilities was the management of competitions for federal grants. It worked like this: Congress would appropriate funds for a new educational program or activity; based on legislative language, someone at OERI would write up a description of what the funds were for and then advertise a request for proposals in the *Federal Register* or *Commerce Business Daily*, which are carefully read by grant hunters and lobbyists; proposals were submitted; a peer-review panel would read them and make recommendations; and I, as assistant secretary, would sign the recommendation to the Secretary to award funding to the winning proposal. I never knew who the peer reviewers were, nor did I pick them (I have heard that some of my predecessors screened the lists, but I worried about charges of "politicization" and kept my distance); this meant that the career staff exercised enormous power over decision making and they tended to defer to familiar names in the leadership cadre of education organizations. (I suspect that the peer reviewers were the same in both Democratic and Republican administrations.)

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In 1992, Congress directed the Department to award a five-year grant for $25 million to establish a center for information about mathematics and science education. When I learned about this, I was surprised, since there was already a federally funded center with this purpose at Ohio State University. But ours was not to wonder why, so a competition was held, and there were two competitive proposals. The peer reviewers favored the proposal from Ohio State University. So now there were two federal centers on the very same campus with the same purpose!

The most controversial competition of my tenure demonstrates the way it works (or, in this case, did not work); it was the only time that I rejected the recommendation of the peer reviewers. A Republican Congressman from Michigan wanted to put some money into the Department's budget for his district, which was laying expensive fiber-optic cable. But the House Appropriations Committee wouldn't let him earmark funds for his district, so he wrote into the Department of Education's appropriations bill that there was to be a competition for a single award of up to $6 million for a high-technology demonstration project. We advertised the competition and received 110 proposals (which suggests that only 110 lobbyists read the *Federal Register* on the day the competition was announced).

Eventually, the results of the competition ended up on my desk, and I read the winning proposal. It did not come from the Congressman's district (which ranked far down on the list). It came from a state department of education, where the applicants proposed to add the money to a continuing statewide technology program; it was a grandiose proposal that claimed it would wire everybody, solve every educational problem in the state, but it lacked specifics about implementation. I called in the staff and said that I thought this was a poor proposal and that it would demonstrate nothing at all. Several days later, they brought back another recommendation, this time from another state; this proposal had more specifics than the first one, but it did not look like the "demonstration" project that the legislation called for.

The day after I made the decision internally not to make the award to either proposal, with no public announcement, the Secretary's office received calls from the office of a very important Democratic senator. His staff had heard that his state had won the award but that I was giving it to someone else. (Actually, his state was second choice, not first.) His staff director told me that they suspected political interference from the White House. The Secretary's office wanted to know what was going on. I responded that, for more than a year, I had signed my name to one worthless award after another; this time I

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was not going to sign my approval unless there was a project that seemed worth $6 million. That made everyone nervous. That is not the way Washington works. Go along to get along—that's the way it works.

I decided to do an internal review of the top-ranking proposals. I asked several key staff members to read the six highest-ranking proposals, and we met to discuss them. One non-career adviser suggested that the best thing to do was to return the $6 million to the Treasury; none of the proposals was worth much. But the career people thought that was dangerous; they explained it this way: If you give the money back to the Treasury, everyone will be angry. You can't afford to anger Senator A (Democrat) because he sits on the Labor and Human Resources Committee, which controls education legislation; and you can't afford to anger Senator B (Democrat), because he is on the same committee. Nor could you ignore the third-ranking proposal from the state of Senator C (Republican), who is the Department's best friend on the appropriations committee.

We jointly decided that we would do what we thought was the right thing, which was to pick the best proposal and hang the political consequences. We decided that the best proposal came from a little school district in McKinney, Texas, which proposed to convert a school into a high-technology center, where there would be 250 students, a teacher-training center, and access to the community six days a week. At least, we thought, this really would provide a demonstration of the uses of high technology in education. Unfortunately, McKinney was ranked fourth by the peer-review panel, which meant that three politically powerful applicants would be furious.

As soon as our decision became known, one of the aggrieved senators announced that he was asking for a formal investigation by the General Accounting Office (GAO), on grounds that I had ignored the recommendations of the peer reviewers and made the decision solely to help President Bush win Texas. This was a consideration that quite frankly had never occurred to either me or my advisers.

To make a long story short, after many interviews by an Abbott and Costello team from GAO, I was cleared of nefarious political designs, the money went to McKinney, and the case was closed. I subsequently learned that our internal processes were embarrassingly inept: the staff lost the comments from the original peer review, the peer reviewers were drawn from the small and incestuous world of educational techies (including the wife of an agency employee), and the peer reviewers were picking the gang that they knew and liked best. No one had heard of the McKinney District, and surprises like that are not supposed to happen. Even later, I heard that the McKinney Dis-

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trict was racked with dissension because of resentment toward the new high-technology school. Sometimes you just can't win, no matter what you do.

Another contretemps occurred by accident. I got a call one day from a reporter, asking what I thought of the newly released gender-bias study by the American Association of University Women. I should explain that, as a rule, federal officials were not supposed to make spontaneous comments to the press. If I gave a speech or wrote an article, it was supposed to be reviewed and cleared by the Secretary's public affairs office, to be sure we were all saying the same things on policy matters. If I were interviewed on the telephone, my liaison from the press office was usually on an extension, presumably to protect me against misquoting. But I forgot about the system when a reporter asked about the AAUW report called "How the Schools Shortchange Girls." The report presented a dreary picture of persistent bias against girls in American schools, allegedly resulting in lowered self-esteem and lowered achievement. I took issue with the report because I had seen data documenting the remarkable improvement in women's educational status between 1970 and 1990. I explained that women were now a majority of college students, a majority of B.A. recipients, a majority of M.A. recipients, and were approaching 50 percent of enrollments in law and medical schools (in 1970, women received less than 10 percent of law and medical degrees). The whole campaign was rather surrealistic in that it was not girls but black males who were far and away the worst performing of any group in the schools (and some studies showed that black males have very high self-esteem, which may have a negative relationship to academic achievement). Little did I know that the AAUW and a clutch of other feminist organizations were trying to get Congressional authorization of $350 million for gender-equity training (which these same organizations would supply). My data momentarily slowed them down.

Jane Pauley of NBC came to interview me, and I knew she was looking for a quote with which to hang me. The interview lasted for half an hour, and I was careful to say the same things over and over again. Whatever she asked, I tried to answer with the data about women's advances in education. But then she said, "Suppose my daughter were in a school where the teachers were horrible to girls, what should I do?" I said, somewhat flippantly (big mistake), "I would put her in a girls' school." The previous day, I had participated in a research seminar on single-sex education, a rapidly disappearing sector in the United States, and it seemed clear that many girls benefit academically in such settings. So I felt comfortable suggesting single-

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sex education as an alternative to Jane Pauley, and of course that fifteen-second exchange was the only part of the interview included in a program that documented how girls were the victims of grievous gender bias in American schools. Soon after the Pauley program was aired, the Secretary received a letter signed by more than fifty Democratic senators and congressmen demanding that I be disciplined or fired for proposing that girls should be sent to single-sex schools. He laughed.

The issue that brought me to Washington was standards, and I spent most of my time promoting the importance of them. American students don't work very hard in school; there are no consequences attached to schoolwork, neither rewards for good work nor sanctions for poor work. Motivated students, driven either by their own inner fires or their parents' ambitions, pursue excellence; the great majority know that little is expected of them. Part of the mission of Alexander's team in the Department was to make the country aware that changes in the economy demanded higher educational attainment by young people.

Every time I gave a speech or wrote an article, I explained why standards mattered and that low expectations were damaging to students. We had initially hoped to sponsor a voluntary national test of academic achievement so that parents and schools could find out how their children were performing; that idea was flatly rejected by Congress and education interest groups. In retrospect, it seems like a naïve idea because the crucial issues had not been addressed—namely, who would write the test, what would be the role of the federal government, and how could it be kept free of contentious battles about multiculturalism and political correctness?

We were impressed by the apparent success of the standards promulgated by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, which had been developed without federal support and which were being used in about forty states. In the fall of 1991, the President of the National Academy of Sciences, Frank Press, asked Secretary Alexander if the Department would be willing to give the Academy a grant to develop national standards for what American students should know and be able to do in science. He readily agreed, and OERI was responsible for processing and supervising the grant. This was dangerous ground, because Congress had not authorized the Department to make grants for national standards, even voluntary ones, and the Department has been prohibited since 1970 from exercising any control over curriculum, instruction, administration, or textbooks (a prohibition that is regularly violated). The reputation of the National Academy of Sciences neutralized criticism, however, and the grant

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went forward. In light of what subsequently happened, I have to wonder about our arrogrance (and my own responsibility) in letting this genie out of the bottle.

During the next year, the Department—in collaboration with the National Endowment for the Humanities and the National Endowment for the Arts—also awarded grants to establish standards in history, the arts, civics, geography, English, and foreign languages. In each case, we made the awards to groups that seemed to be the most reputable and inclusive in each field—for example, the National Council for Geographic Education in geography. The English award was made only days before we left office to a tripartite coalition composed of the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), the International Reading Association, and the Center for the Study of Reading at the University of Illinois. This was a big gamble, because the director of NCTE had testified before a federal hearing in opposition to standards only a year earlier. The negotiations took months, and I was never certain whether the leaders of the English profession seriously intended to develop standards, since many resisted even the idea of standard English. As it turned out, people in the field were apparently not ready to commit themselves to real standards for what all students should know and be able to do. In the spring of 1994, the Department of Education canceled the contract for English standards on grounds of lack of progress.

The history standards (especially the American history standards) provoked the greatest controversy. In the fall of 1991, the Department and the National Endowment for the Humanities made a grant to the National Center for History in the Schools at the University of California at Los Angeles to arrive at a consensus on national history standards. I knew that the effort to forge history standards would be rife with minefields, but I expected that it could be done, because of my own experience in drafting the California history curriculum, which balanced the claims of multiculturalism and the common culture and which placed the democratic idea at the center of the history curriculum. The UCLA Center had received several years of funding from NEH and was well known to Lynne Cheney, NEH's chairman.

Publication of the standards in the fall of 1994 set off a war of words; many critics, led by Lynne Cheney, attacked them; the U.S. Senate voted 99–1 to express its disapproval of them; the talk-show hosts savaged them; but state and local school boards around the country quietly began incorporating their lessons into the local curricula. The earnest effort by the writers of the standards to de-emphasize traditional heroes like George Washington and Thomas Edison

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and to discover little-known heroes who were not white males set off a furor that has not yet died down.

It is too soon to say that the attempt to promote national standards was a failure. Some of the efforts, especially the standards in civics, geography, and the arts have won praise for their intellectual rigor. I know that if I had to do it all over again, I would have insisted on different elements in the contracts. For example, proposals for national standards in any subject area should be parsimonious, not exceeding one hundred pages in length (the history standards—world, U.S., and K–4—exceed six hundred pages); standards should be confined only to what all students should know and be able to do (documents should not be so detailed that they summarize the field or offer explicit instructions on how to teach); any proposed standards should be published in a loose-leaf notebook with wide margins for comments, so that it is clear that they are provisional and subject to revision; every consensus arrived at should include people who are neither scholars nor teachers, people such as parents, journalists, lawyers, legislators, civic leaders, and scientists (this is known as "the barbershop test"); any proposed national standards should be field-tested for three years in several school districts or states before they are offered for adoption; the standards in any field should be non-intrusive in the sense that they ought not dictate a particular teaching method (for example, phonics or whole-language in English); and standards should not present as authoritative any interpretations that are disputed by reputable scholars (if an issue is unresolved, it should be presented as a controversy).

Hindsight, of course, supplies 20/20 vision. At worst, the effort to create national standards gave millions of federal dollars to partisans in the culture wars; but at best, the discussion about standards, what they are and why we need them, has become an undeniable factor in state and national debates about education, which is valuable in itself. I don't like to fall back on the cliché "time will tell" to assess the ultimate value of this venture, but in this case it seems to apply.

When I think back on my brief career in the federal government, there is one incident that summarizes best what I learned in Washington. In the summer of 1992, I attended a meeting with David Kearns and the people in the Department who worked with Congress on appropriations. The issue before us was what to do about several congressional earmarks—that is, directions to spend money on specific projects. One was for $1 million for a half-baked proposal from a state university to create an "institute for the reinvention of schools," proposed by a professor with no particular qualifications or experience; his senator, a Republican, wanted it for his state. Others were

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for programs that would duplicate existing federal activities, backed by senators whose states wanted the money. After an hour of discussion, Kearns, one of the finest and gentlest of men, banged his fist on the table and said in exasperation, "This is crazy; we are sitting around trying to figure out what to do with earmarks and at the same time Japanese educators are sitting around a table on the other side of the world figuring out how to make their schools better."

When I left, I felt sad about "striking the set," as the team with which I had worked closely for eighteen months disbanded. I knew that I would miss not only the group that Lamar Alexander had pulled together, but those with whom I worked in OERI, including both those I brought in as well as career employees. In the academic world, I had never had that sense of comradeship, of striving together with a large group to reach a goal. For a few months after I left, people would ask, "Did you accomplish anything?" And I would talk about the publications, none of them earthshaking, and about the efforts to make the idea of standards palatable to educators, which was a matter of conviction.

Do I regret working in Washington? Not a bit. What I learned is not in any of the textbooks; for some kinds of knowledge, there is no substitute for experience. My faith in the two-party system is stronger than ever, because I learned the value of turnover. The amount of power that is concentrated in the nation's capital is immense. Only a regular rotation of newcomers with a fresh perspective, with an intention to go home someday, and with an undiminished capacity for outrage, can restrain and counter the permanent and insular political class that has made Washington its home.

Two weeks after the 1992 election, I attended a gala dinner at the New York Public Library, where I was among a group of writers who were honored as "Literary Lions." I was still a government official and felt slightly illegitimate since the intensity of government work leaves little time for any writing other than speeches or an occasional article (which, so long as one is in a political job, has at least a strain of boilerplate). As I looked at the other writers, I reflected that we were being honored for what we had done on our own, without politics, without negotiation, without compromise, without pre-clearance, without deference to committees, commissions, or tethered minds. And I knew that night in which world I belonged.

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Is Racism a Western Idea?

DINESH D'SOUZA

THE CONTEMPORARY MOOD of frustration and pessimism about race relations springs from the apparent failure of the civil rights movement to heal the historic division between whites and blacks in this country. In the 1950s and 1960s, supporters of civil rights argued that racism was based on ignorance, fear, and hate. The proposed solutions were education and integration. Scholars contended that as whites came into closer contact with blacks—as they studied and lived and worked alongside them—their long-standing prejudices and stereotypes would dissipate and ignorance would give way to enlightenment. Today's liberal melancholy arises largely out of the recognition that enlightenment has failed.

Consequently, many white liberals and black activists seem to have embraced the view, popularized by the black legal scholar Derrick Bell and the white political scientist Andrew Hacker, that racism is (as Bell puts it) an "integral, permanent and indestructible" feature of the human condition or at least of the Western psyche. In this view, since it is unrealistic to expect that American society can transcend race, the only practical solution is to institutionalize it. Proportional representation in job hiring and multiculturalism in education are aimed at promoting such prudent race management. Yet neither remedy offers much hope of moving America closer to Martin Luther King's dream of a society in which we are judged by ability and character rather than by color. A generation after King articulated that vision, America is a less hopeful and more race-conscious society.

To see whether this contemporary liberal melancholy is justified, it is essential to ask some fundamental questions about the origins of racism. Scholars who study the subject have advanced three general theories to explain it. The first view, which is perhaps the most prevalent, is that racism is a universal problem—virtually all societies

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throughout recorded history have endured racism in one form or another. An alternative suggestion, put forward especially by Marxist scholars, is that racism is a product of slavery and that it developed as a rationalization or excuse for enslaving other people. Finally, some black nationalists and Afrocentrists argue that racism is a peculiar feature of the Euro-American mind, and its roots go back to the origins of Western civilization.

All these views, I intend to argue, are wrong. Racism is not a universal staple of the human condition. Racism did not always exist in the West. Nor is racism a product of slavery. An examination of the historical record reveals that racism did have a beginning. Although it can be found in embryonic form among the Chinese and the Arabs in the late Middle Ages, racism is a modern and Western idea. Racism developed before slavery, although it was later reinforced by slavery. Far from being the product of irrationality, racism arose in Europe as part of a rational and scientific project to understand the world. Racism was inspired by the European voyages abroad, which produced an unprecedented project to classify and rank the diversity of the world's plants, animals, and peoples. For European travelers, missionaries, and ethnologists, racism provided a coherent account of large civilizational differences that could not be attributed to climate or environment and were therefore considered intrinsic. Racism arose as a theory of Western civilizational superiority.

Although the term is used in various ways, the basic meaning of racism is clear. Racism is a theory of intellectual or moral superiority based upon the physical characteristics of race. According to *Webster's New World Dictionary*, it refers to a "doctrine or teaching . . . that claims to find racial differences in character and intelligence" and that "asserts the superiority of one race over another," as well as "any program or practice of racial discrimination or segregation based on such beliefs." From this definition one must meet four criteria to qualify as a racist. First, one must believe in the existence of biologically distinguishable races. Second, one must rank these in terms of superior and inferior groups. Third, one must hold these rankings to be intrinsic or innate. Finally, one must seek to use them as the basis for denying other people their rights based on their membership in a particular racial group.

The prevailing view, shared by virtually everyone in today's debate, is that racism is a product of irrational antipathy. Yet this assumption raises a historical problem: if racism is a product of ignorance, fear, and hate, why is it the case that the beliefs most people would unhesitatingly consider racist were shared by many of the most enlightened, courageous, and humane figures in America and in the

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West until only a few decades ago? It is hard to deny that many of the most eminent European and American religious leaders, philanthropists, philosophers, scientists, and statesmen were, by modern criteria, outright racists. Nothing could be more ridiculous than to imagine such leading figures as David Hume or Immanuel Kant cowed and blinded by simple superstitious fright. They weren't "threatened" by blacks. Yet here is what Hume wrote in 1748:

> I am apt to suspect that the Negroes, and in general all the other species of men, to be naturally inferior to the whites. There never was any civilized nation of any other complexion than white, nor even any individual eminent in action or speculation. No ingenious manufactures among them, no arts, no sciences. . . . Such a uniform and constant difference could not happen, in so many countries and ages, if nature had not made an original distinction betwixt these breeds of men.

Kant, no less harsh, in 1764 remarked:

> The Negroes of Africa have received from nature no intelligence that rises above the foolish. The difference between the two races is thus a substantial one: it appears to be just as great in respect of the faculties of the mind as in color.

Montesquieu, Voltaire, Hegel, and Thomas Jefferson held similar views. Why did they believe as they did?

Is Racism Universal?

Ignorance, fear, and hatred are all human qualities and, as such, universal. Consequently, if racism were a product of unreasonable insecurity and hostility, we would expect to find it in virtually all societies at all times. In fact, scholars vehemently disagree about whether racism is universal. Some confidently maintain, as Joel Kovel did in *White Racism*, that "racist phenomena are ubiquitous throughout history" and that "racial hatred is built into human nature." Racism is "an ancient form of behavior that is probably found worldwide," Tzvetan Todorov asserts. Stephen Gould suspects that racial prejudice is "as old as recorded history." In a well-known textbook, Thomas Gossett claims to have discovered racist sentiments in the ancient civilizations of Egypt, China, India, and Greece.

Yet no one who espouses the universal view of the origins of racism has made a systematic historical study to identify the presence of racism in all human cultures. Typically, scholars make a kind of grand global survey, foraging for facts that seem to suggest animus and conflict between groups, which they cite to demonstrate the ubiquity

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of racism. For example, some Chinese historians of the Han dynasty in the third century B.C. describe their encounters with savage people "who greatly resemble the monkeys from whom they are descended." The Chinese of the T'ang period seem to show unmitigated contempt for the nakedness and primitivism of the dark islanders of the south. In India there is the long legacy of the caste system, which seems somehow racist. Historians cite numerous examples of African tribes such as the majestic Zulus who frequently link other tribes with wild beasts. And we know that Muslim travelers during the Middle Ages frequently made derogatory comments about blacks, such as the eleventh-century scholar Sa'id al-Andalusi, who found Ethiopians and Nubians "fickle, foolish, ignorant, and lacking in self-control."

These examples seem to establish decisively the presence of color consciousness in various cultures of the ancient world. They also indicate that some Chinese, Indians, Zulus, Greeks, and Muslims did not practice the modern art of euphemism: they spoke with brutal candor about aliens and outsiders. We may reasonably conclude that convictions of superiority seem to be widely held by ancient societies. But do these adverse sentiments amount to racism?

Consider the case of the Indian caste system. At first glance, it displays many of the features that would be expected in a racist society. The caste system is hierarchical and hereditary. Lower castes are stigmatized and marked out as inferior. There are strict prohibitions on social contact between members of higher and lower castes. Yet all the members of the various castes—Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaisya, and Shudra—belong to the same race. In other words, the caste system erects religious and social distinctions among people who share similar features and cannot be easily distinguished on the basis of appearance. Moreover, Hindus typically ascribe caste status not to biological features but to good or bad actions performed in a previous life.

Other examples prove equally problematic. The ancient Chinese were highly xenophobic, regarding their "Middle Kingdom" as the center of the universe, and all foreigners worthy only to be sycophants and worshipers at the feet of the Chinese emperor, who ruled with a "mandate from heaven." Because of the relatively high state of Chinese civilization, members of the Chinese ruling class had for centuries regarded Europeans as barbarians. The problem with pronouncing this attitude to be racist, however, is that the Chinese were just as hostile to the Japanese, the Koreans, and other subjugated Asian peoples who looked very much like them as they were toward foreigners who were white and brown and black. The Chinese never

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developed a racial hierarchy among peoples or a specifically biological basis for claims of superiority. The Chinese did not discriminate based on race: they held themselves to be superior to everyone.

The Zulus, a conquering force in southern Africa, were famously ethnocentric, regarding their own group as the center of the universe. But so in their own way were the Sothos, the Dinka, the Fulani, the Wolof, the Hausa, and many other African nations. The differences, italicized in tribal conflict, typically had nothing to do with color, since the combatants had that quality in common. For instance, the main physical characteristic dividing the feuding Tutsi and Hutu, who inhabit modern Rwanda and Burundi, is height.

The Muslim writer Sa'id al-Andalusi's views about Ethiopians and Nubians must be placed in the context of his even harsher appraisal of white Europeans, particularly Slavs. "Their temperaments are frigid, their humors raw. . . . They lack keenness of understanding and clarity of intelligence, and are overcome by ignorance and dullness, lack of discernment, and stupidity." Typical of Muslim writing in the Middle Ages, al-Andalusi's work comments harshly on all communities that are perceived not to possess the civilizing light of Islam, regardless of their race or color. Al-Andalusi is entirely in the tradition epitomized by a tenth-century Islamic writer:

> The people of Iraq have sound minds, commendable passions, balanced natures, and high proficiency in every art, together with well-proportioned limbs, well-compounded humors, and a pale brown color, which is the most apt and proper color. They are the ones who are done to a turn in the womb. They do not come out with something between blond, blanched and leprous coloring, such as the infants dropped from the wombs of the women of the Slavs and others of similar light complexion; nor are they overdone in the womb until they are burned, so that the child comes out black, murky, malodorous, stinking, and crinkly-haired, with uneven limbs, deficient minds, and depraved passions, such as the Ethiopians and other blacks who resemble them. The Iraqis are neither half-baked dough nor burned crust, but between the two.

Today, of course, such theorizing is rare, but it was widespread in the ancient world. Anthropologists have discovered precisely the same account of the origins of skin color in African and American Indian cultures. Only in each case the details are adjusted so that the ideal complexion belongs to the group espousing the belief.

What emerges from these examples is a crucial distinction that anthropologists and historians make between racism on the one hand, and tribalism or ethnocentrism on the other. While racism refers to the hierarchical ranking of human beings based on biologi-

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cal characteristics, tribalism and ethnocentrism are nothing more than an intense preference for one's own group over strangers. Racism is necessarily based on biology, whereas ethnocentrism is typically rooted in culture. Nationality, religion, shared traditions, and mere geographical proximity are much more common denominators for tribalism and ethnocentrism than is race.

Tribalism and ethnocentrism are universal. All human communities from the beginning of time, whether primitive or advanced, Western or non-Western, are self-centered and culturally narcissistic; they regard strangers with caution, if not aggression. The anthropologist Ruth Benedict pointed out that the formula "I belong to the elect" is characteristic of agrarian and pre-modern societies, many of whose tribal names, in their own languages, mean "human beings" or "men," in contrast to outsiders, who are regarded as less than human and eligible for hunting or enslavement. Tribalism may be described as a strong group loyalty that we feel in varying degrees for our family, our children, our close relatives, our religious group, our country of origin. Groups, like individuals, tend to be self-interested; ethnocentrism parallels egocentrism. This group feeling creates a solidarity among inhabitants of a community that many scholars argue is a necessary basis for defense of the group and cooperation among its members.

Ethnocentrism and tribalism are typically accompanied by provincialism or narrow-mindedness, and xenophobia, but these, too, are not the same as racism. Conflicts between Serb and Croatian, Sikh and Hindu, Basque and Spanish, Protestant and Catholic, English and Irish, Turk and Armenian are undoubtedly tribal conflicts characterized by ethnocentric loyalties, yet they pit against each other groups that have the same skin color and belong to the same race. One would have to stretch the definition of racism beyond comprehension to term these "racist" conflicts.

Nor is anti-Semitism simply an expression of racism. Contrary to Nazi propaganda, Jews do not make up a biologically distinct race; they are a religious and cultural group made up of white Jews, brown Jews, and black Jews. For centuries, Christian hostility to Jews was not based on race but upon alleged Jewish complicity in deicide and upon Jewish rejection of the Messiah. Even secular anti-Semitism has a career distinct from racism. Precisely because Jews enjoyed a kind of protective coloration and could not be easily distinguished from other Germans, the Nazis were compelled to use yellow stars, tattoos, and other insignia to mark them for discrimination and ultimate extermination.

Those who assert that racism can be found in all societies through-

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out history, then, are wrong. While we can locate various forms of tribalism and ethnocentrism, these do not amount to racism. "Racism, unlike ethnocentrism," the sociologist Pierre Van Den Berghe rightly concludes, "is not a universal phenomenon. Only a few human groups have deemed themselves superior because of the content of their gonads."

Racism and Slavery

If racism is not strictly universal, perhaps it originated, as some scholars suggest, as an ideological support for slavery. In *Capitalism and Slavery* Eric Williams claims that slavery developed entirely for economic reasons: "Slavery was not born of racism; rather, racism was the consequence of slavery." The historian Basil Davidson writes that "race contempt crept in when free men could justify their material interests by the scorn they had for slaves." Such popular writers as Salman Rushdie and Lerone Bennett echo these sentiments. On one point these writers are surely right: over time in America, the practice of slavery supported and perpetuated racism. It is not hard to see how white Americans who enslaved Africans for hundreds of years would develop a doctrine of inferiority to rationalize the oppression. Once transatlantic slavery developed, as Winthrop Jordan argues, a symbiotic and mutually reinforcing relationship evolved between slavery and racism.

But from this it does not follow that slavery can account for the *origin* of racism. Racism burgeoned and flourished in Europe from the fifteenth through the twentieth centuries even in places such as the Scandinavian countries where there were few slaves or none at all. Traveling in America during the early nineteenth century, Alexis de Tocqueville observed that hostility to blacks was much stronger in the states where slavery was virtually extinct than in the slaveholding regions. "Prejudice against color is stronger North than South," the black abolitionist Frederick Douglass agreed. Racial bias against blacks seems to have existed before transatlantic slavery and indeed to have constituted one of the reasons that Europeans chose to transport Africans as slaves to the New World. It is surely significant, after all, that Europeans did not persist in enslaving Indians or other groups but ended up with an exclusively black slave population. Racism is habitually equated with slavery today because the two practices evolved together in America. But in this respect the American experience is historically unique. As Orlando Patterson demonstrates in *Slavery and Social Death*, slavery is a universal institution practiced in virtually all nations for thousands of years.

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Slavery has existed from the dawn of human history right down to the 20th century, in the most primitive of human societies and in the most civilized. There is no region on earth that has not at some time harbored the institution. Probably there is no group of people whose ancestors were not at one time slaves or slaveholders.

Slaves were usually acquired by kidnapping, as payments of tribute, debt, and taxation, and by inheritance. People sometimes sold themselves or their children into slavery to relieve poverty and starvation. By far the most common method to gain slaves was through war and captivity. In many societies slavery was regarded as the humane alternative to the accepted practice of killing captives: frequently the male combatants were slain, and women and children were spared for use as concubines and slaves. Hardly a European invention, slavery of this sort was widely practiced in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East.

The ancient Sumerians, Babylonians, Egyptians, and Assyrians all practiced slavery, and defined slaves as property. Indian temples regularly used slaves, and India's oldest legal treatise, the Laws of Manu, which dates to the second century B.C., prescribes slavery as a punishment for failure to pay a fine. The Greeks and Romans employed slaves as domestic servants, craftsmen and artisans, common laborers, gladiators, and soldiers. In ancient Burma, northern Europe, and the Near East, slaves were also used as articles of trade and sometimes as a form of currency in place of money. The ancient Chinese used both domestic and imported slaves and customarily buried them alive with their deceased masters.

Yet although the Chinese, the Indians, the Greeks, the Romans, the Arabs, black Africans, and native Americans all placed human beings into bondage, the remarkable fact about slavery in the ancient world is that it had little or nothing to do with race. Scholars of the subject conclude that most of the slaves in ancient India, China, Europe, and Africa belonged to the same race as their owners. Of the total slave population in the five centuries before Christ, the largest number was probably that of white slaves. The term "slave" actually derives from "Slav," a reference to the large number of white slaves captured from that region of Central Europe. During the Middle Ages, David Brion Davis points out, in the cosmopolitan slave markets of Baghdad and Constantinople, traders erected platforms for the display of black slaves, white slaves, brown slaves, and yellow slaves. Surveying the historical record on slavery and racism, Pierre Van Den Berghe concludes: "Slavery has often existed without a trace of racism. Conversely, racism can develop and persist in the absence of slavery."

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Were the Ancient Greeks Racist?

A third possibility for the origin of racism, promoted mainly by Afrocentric scholars, is that racism is a uniquely white pathology that can be traced to the beginnings of Western civilization. Marimba Ani contends that "racism is endemic to European history," arising out of a white "supremacist ideology" that has proved fearful and aggressive "since its inception in the Indo-European hordes of the North." Michael Bradley in *The Iceman Inheritance* argues that "racism is a predisposition of but one race of mankind—the white race."

The question of whether the Greeks, the Romans, and the early Christians were racist is examined in two books, *Blacks in Antiquity* and *Before Color Prejudice*, by the African American scholar Frank Snowden. An emeritus professor of classics at Howard University, Snowden is perhaps the leading scholar in the world on how blacks were viewed in ancient civilization. Analyzing the literary, numismatic, artistic, and archaeological evidence of encounters between Europeans and Ethiopians in the ancient Mediterranean, Snowden argues that despite the awareness of color differences in the ancient world, differences that were acknowledged and discussed in frank and sometimes pungent fashion, neither the ancient Greeks nor the early Christians espoused anything resembling a theory of racial superiority. By and large, the two groups espoused a positive view of the African blacks they knew best—the Ethiopians.

A cursory reading of Greek sources confirms this. For Homer, blacks were the blameless of the gods. Diodorus mentioned their widespread reputation for religious piety. Seneca found them notable for their courage and love of freedom. Lucian noted that in astrological knowledge they were the wisest of men. Herodotus, the first European to comment on the physical appearance of Ethiopians, described them as the most handsome of men. Martial noted that, while he was pursued by a woman whiter than a swan, he sought the affections of one blacker than pitch. Snowden quotes a Greek epigrammatist, Asclepiades, "Gazing at her beauty I melt like wax before the fire. If she is black, what is that to me? So are coals, but when we burn them, they shine like rosebuds." Snowden concludes that manumissions were open to black slaves as much as to slaves of any other color.

Like countless other peoples, the Greeks were ethnocentric and regarded aliens as "barbarians," an onomatopoeic term apparently derived from the incomprehensible bar-bar-bar sound made by foreigners. Yet the epithet applied to anyone who could not speak Greek and who was therefore considered primitive. The Greeks did not

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describe as barbarians anyone on account of their skin color, and Snowden says there is no evidence that blacks were systematically associated with unintelligence. Strabo, he points out, concluded that the most barbarian people in the world were the Irish. The Greeks were well aware of variations in features and skin color, Snowden says. Like many other people in the ancient world, however, the Greeks were what we may call environmentalists: they typically attributed differences of appearance and of custom to the influence of geography and climate. Ptolemy found some of the habits of black Africans primitive; he blamed them not on natural deficiencies but on the enervating and oppressive temperature of the region. In general, the Greeks attributed the dark skin of the Ethiopians to the sun's heat.

One of the clearest expressions of the Greek understanding of racism and slavery is found in the work of Aristotle. "It is clear that some are by nature free, and others are by nature slaves," Aristotle writes in *The Politics*, "and for these latter the condition of slavery is both beneficial and just." This statement is sometimes cited as an early expression of Western prejudice. Aristotle also denounces virtually all non-Greeks as barbarians. Yet although he supports the institution of slavery, Aristotle distinguishes between natural slavery and conventional slavery, recognizing that many foreign people are enslaved purely on account of accidents such as shipwreck, kidnapping, or being captured in wars. Aristotle makes a crucial distinction between free men who are capable of being citizens and slaves who by nature are incapable of assuming personal and civic responsibilities. In justifying slavery and condemning barbarism, Aristotle shows no interest in group differences of appearance or color. His theories of servitude and citizenship are ethnocentric; they have no racial basis. Aristotle reserved some of his harshest cultural observations for Northern Europeans, the English in particular, whom he regarded as "incapable of ruling over others" and "wanting in intelligence and skill."

Scholars studying the Christian era that supplanted the classical one in Europe have found much evidence of prejudice and hostility, so that Christianity today is routinely criticized for encouraging, if not inventing, racism, sexism, and homophobia and for providing a spiritual justification for slavery and colonialism. Forrest Wood's *The Arrogance of Faith* is a wholesale assault on a religion that Wood alleges "has been fundamentally racist in its theology, organization and practice." Yet Wood's inquiry seems to surprise even the author. "In none of the biblical passages directly or obliquely sanctioning slavery could one find a specific reference to race or color," he concedes. "Despite the association of darkness with all that was evil and demonic, early

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Christians did not, in fact, exhibit a negative attitude toward black people generally."

The primary distinction that Christians made was between the believer and the infidel. For example, Saint Augustine (who was himself an African) emphasized, distinguishing between the "City of God" and the "City of Man," that it is through the instrument of conversion that all may be equal as children of God and as citizens in a Christian civilization. The religious commitment of the early Christians generated a passionate universalism, as reflected in Paul's letter to the Galatians: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." For the convert to the faith, racial and even cultural differences were superseded by Christian brotherhood. No group was excluded: as Martin Bernal has pointed out, early Christian and medieval illustrations routinely portray one of the magi who came to worship the infant Christ as black.

This brings us to the issue of color symbolism. The early Christians appropriated pagan images of the sun as a source of life, and light as a symbol of divinity. Frank Snowden argues, however, that in contrast to contemporary prejudices about color, for the early Christians the symbolic attachment of darkness and evil in no way implied that black people were cast outside the orbit of salvation or Christian acceptance. Origen, one of the fathers of the early Christian church, argued that human souls are initially black like the Ethiopians, but through divine redemption all souls can be brightened. In fact Origen contrasts the Ethiopian's natural hue, caused by the heat of the sun, with blackness in the soul, caused by sin and dereliction. In the same vein, Augustine urged Christians to go to the remotest corners of the world, including darkest Ethiopia, to spread the light of the Christian message.

Greeks, Romans, and early Christians made crucial distinctions—between nature and custom, between civilization and barbarism, between salvation and damnation—that would later be invoked to justify racism. But there is no racism in the distinctions themselves, nor can the ancient and early Christian societies of the West be rightly accused of color prejudice.

The Chinese and Arab View of Blacks

It should not be imagined that the absence of racism in the ancient world can be easily explained by the lack of civilizational contact between peoples. In fact, such contacts have existed for millennia. Yet such early encounters between the Chinese, the Indians, the Europe-

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ans, and the North Africans did not generate widespread convictions of intrinsic superiority, mainly because these civilizational exchanges in the ancient world were transacted between nations that had developed the economic, military, and cultural resources to project across continental chasms. As pointed out by William McNeill and Jerry Bentley, who have studied early cross-cultural encounters, only the richest and most powerful civilizations of the period could sustain trade and contact over great distances. Yet even the merchants and combatants could not have been unaware of the fragility of their enterprise, which carried such risks that no one could possibly consider any military or trade advantage to be enduring or permanent. There was no shortage of arrogance on the part of the Arabs, Europeans, Indians, and Chinese, but no group was strong enough to dominate the others entirely, and so their hubris was tempered by respect among rivals of comparable strength. This began to change in the modern world when Western science and technology provided a decisive and seemingly irreversible advantage.

The African American scholar Alvin Poussaint identifies racism with "whites' deep fear of Africa," the result, he contends, of "white projection . . . of all of the unacceptable impulses in themselves." In the view of Poussaint and other scholars, whites have a peculiar tendency to take their own bad qualities and deposit them on others, especially blacks. But before the rise of the modern West, there were the great civilizations of the Arabs and the Chinese that were the most advanced in the world in the late Middle Ages, and it is worth exploring what the people from those cultures thought about Africa.

The Chinese arrived on the coast of Africa several times between the eleventh and the fifteenth centuries, especially during the famous voyages spearheaded by Cheng-ho during the Ming period of 1405–1433. Coming from perhaps the richest, most learned, and most technically skilled civilization on the planet for a thousand years, Chinese sailors were struck by what they viewed as the barbarism of southern Africa, and they speculated that Africans seemed incapable of developing an advanced society. As early as the eighth century, Du Huan, an official of the T'ang dynasty, found himself transported as a war captive to black Africa, probably the region now called Eritrea. His impressions, preserved in his *Record of My Travels*, were decidedly unfavorable. The blacks he found to be "uncouth," lacking in respect for their parents, and promiscuous to the point of practicing incest. A later expedition by Chinese sailors produced scary and fantastic accounts of African divination, including reports of magicians who could change themselves into beasts and birds. J. J. L. Duyvendak in *China's Discovery of Africa* cites reports about Africa, preserved in Ming

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court histories, that suggest a subsistence economy. "They live in solitary and dispersed villages. The customs are very simple. The mountains are uncultivated. Fish are caught in the sea with nets." A nineteenth-century account by the geographer Xu Jiyu corroborates numerous European reports: black Africans "appear as if they were living in the most ancient times. . . . They were unable to develop a civilization by themselves."

Another navigating people, the Muslims, made numerous journeys to southern Africa. Like the early Christians, the Muslims have traditionally distinguished between believers and infidels. As with the Bible, the Koran expresses no racial or color prejudice. Yet Muslim travel accounts between the tenth and the fifteenth centuries show a condescending attitude toward blacks and also toward other groups perceived as unenlightened and culturally inferior. For a Persian writer, black Africans are "distant from the standards of humanity," for which he mainly blames the sun's heat. Touring in Mali in the fourteenth century, the famous Muslim traveler Ibn Battuta is impressed to see complete safety and signs of religiosity; on the other hand, he deplores the primitivism of the locals, which is evident to him in "the reprehensible practice among many of eating carrion, dogs and asses."

At the same time, Muslim writers expressed no less derogatory views of Europeans. The Muslim geographer Mas'udi finds the Franks and Slavs of Europe to be the ultimate barbarians, and they become paler, grosser, and dumber the farther north you go. He blames this on the absence of the sun's heat. Battuta himself journeyed a good deal in Europe, where he was unimpressed by the level of culture, for which he blamed frigid weather and infidel faith. Perhaps tiring of temperature as an explanation, another Muslim traveler of the period attributes the stupidity of the Sicilians and Italians to their gross habit of eating onions.

One of the most famous accounts of black Africa is that of Ibn Khaldun, the leading Muslim historian of the late Middle Ages. For Khaldun, black Africans are "close in character to dumb animals. Most of them dwell in caves and thickets, live in savage isolation, and eat each other." Not to be exclusive, Khaldun adds: "The same applies to the Slavs." We are amazed to find in Ibn Khaldun's writings stereotypical perceptions of black Africans that most people would identify as the distinctive product of American prejudice. More than five hundred years ago, Khaldun wrote in his *Muqaddimah*: "We have seen that Negroes are in general characterized by levity, excitability and great emotionalism. They are found eager to dance whenever they hear a melody." Yet Khaldun has an environmental explanation:

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the tropical climate. Whenever he gets into his hot bath, Khaldun informs his readers, he feels like singing! Yet one cannot find in Khaldun's writings any doctrine of intrinsic biological superiority. The most we can say is that Khaldun implies, for whatever reason, that there is a large and possibly unbridgeable gap between the high culture of the Arab world and the primitivism of black Africa.

Although there is little doubt of their religious and cultural ethnocentrism, the Arabs and the Chinese seem not to have developed a systematic ideology of racism. What the Arab and Chinese encounter with Africa illustrates is the acute civilizational arrogance that goes with relative political, economic, military, and technological superiority. All cultures are ethnocentric and begin with notions of supremacy, but powerful cultures that encounter simpler and weaker societies are strengthened in their convictions of superiority. When such arrogance is given a biological foundation, racism is the result.

The Civilization Gap

Like the Chinese and the Arabs before them, what the European cognoscenti—the small population of explorers, travelers, soldiers, and missionaries who formed opinions on these matters—encountered and sought to explain was a widespread and conspicuous primitivism. The early European travelers were, by our standards, gullible about the rest of the world. Portuguese sailors kept a watchful eye for strange sea monsters and dog-headed men. Columbus himself fully anticipated finding "people born with tails" and other prodigies. Walter Raleigh, Francisco de Orellana, and John Swan displayed similar credulity.

Yet these Europeans did not approach Asia, Africa, and the Americas with hostile preconceptions. On the contrary, they were generally respectful and envious of the achievements of many foreign cultures. Much of the European fascination with the Far East was fired by the travel accounts of the Venetian explorer Marco Polo, who died in 1323 after serving in the court of the Great Khan, and left behind alluring (and somewhat exaggerated) catalogs of Oriental wealth. The Portuguese did not go to Africa in search of slaves; they were magnetically attracted by legends of African gold, and they wanted to find a way to the spice treasures of Asia. Some Europeans had a religious motive for going to Africa. They were tantalized by reports of a Christian prince living at the edge of the Muslim world; for more than three hundred years, Europeans would search for this elusive Prester John, who was widely believed to be black.

Whatever their shortcomings and mixed motives, the Europeans

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who voyaged abroad were the historical instruments of a major world transformation: the advent of modernity. Up until the late Middle Ages there were several civilizations of comparable military, economic, and political strength—Chinese, North African, Indian. But between the sixteenth and the nineteenth centuries, this relative equilibrium began to change, and Europe emerged decisively as the most vibrant and powerful civilization. European strength was indicated by an increased production of goods, which generated rising standards of living; by increases in the population, owing to a declining death rate; by an increase in material and technical knowledge; and by military sophistication, which reflected both wealth and the application of new inventions. The reasons for Western hegemony are complex, but essentially the rise of Europe is connected to the evolution of three systems: science, representative self-government, and capitalism.

The rudiments of human curiosity, participation in public affairs, and the trading impulse are obviously universal traits. But the West developed specific institutional channels for these human proclivities—for instance, universities, parliamentary systems, joint stock companies—and specific mechanisms for assembling and processing political, economic, and general information: elections, the free market, the scientific method. These developments produced not simply a different way of fighting wars or building cathedrals, but a radically new way of seeing the world and man's place in it. No longer did the best minds in Europe think that they lived in an "enchanted world," governed by mysterious spirits; rather, they were increasingly convinced that the universe operated according to rational laws, discernible to the human mind unassisted by divine revelation. For the first time, it seemed plausible to think of history as having a secular purpose and technology as the engine of irreversible progress. Francis Bacon's hope—that a new kind of knowledge would enable "the relief of man's estate," an increasing triumph over the elements—was being realized.

Europe between the sixteenth and the nineteenth centuries was a rich, powerful, increasingly self-conscious, and rapidly changing civilization. Several other societies had produced important inventions—for example, the Chinese invented printing and the compass; the number system came from India and was mistakenly called "Arabic numerals" because the Arabs brought it to Europe. Europeans knew that Muslim scholars in Toledo and elsewhere had preserved much of the learning of the classical world that made possible the humanist Renaissance of Petrarch, Rabelais, and Leonardo da Vinci. Yet civilizational development does not always accrue to the originators or even

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to the preservers of ideas, but to those who employ them in creative ways. European civilization was able to use foreign ideas and innovations, along with its own, to transform itself, while the institutions of other societies remained relatively unchanged. Between the fifteenth and the nineteenth centuries, the West made a swift and irreversible transition from a traditional society to a modern society. Enlightenment would help to produce Western success—and also Western racism.

The Embarrassment of Primitivism

For the Europeans who first voyaged abroad, much of the rest of the world came as a shock for which they were poorly prepared. Early modern accounts, such as those of Richard Hakluyt in the sixteenth century or Samuel Purchas in the seventeenth century, convey the stupefaction of the Europeans who encountered distant and unfamiliar peoples. Europeans who were even then making a transition into the modern era found themselves genuinely amazed and horrified at other cultures that appeared virtually static, confined from time immemorial in the nomadic or the agrarian stage. The consequence was that many Europeans viewed the non-white peoples of Africa, the Americas, and elsewhere as savages and barbarians, "beyond the pale of civilization," to borrow Metternich's phrase.

It is no accident that it was the Portuguese who arrived on the shores of black Africa and not the black Africans who voyaged to Europe. The Portuguese had the three-mast ship, the compass, the quadrant, the astrolabe, navigation charts, and a comparatively good knowledge of winds, currents, stars, and latitudes. The Portuguese knew, as did educated Europeans of the time, that the earth was not flat. When the Portuguese sailed abroad in the second half of the fifteenth century, they left an emerging modern European civilization that had almost a hundred universities; that had several hundred printing presses and some fifteen thousand book titles in circulation; that had cannons and body armor and gunpowder; that used modern business methods such as checks, bills of exchange, insurance, and double-entry bookkeeping; that had mechanical clocks and precision instruments; that had harnessed the power of wind and water to grind grain, crush ore, mash pulp for paper, saw lumber and marble, and pump water; that had built Gothic cathedrals. This technical head start would soon produce a very large gap between Europe and the rest of the world. The enormous European lead is suggested by just a few European inventions and technological advances of the period, a list that could be vastly multiplied: the microscope (1590), the telescope (1608), the barometer (1643), the pendulum clock (1656),

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the thermometer (1714), the spinning jenny (1770), the steam engine (1781), vaccination (1796), the electric battery (1800).

Essentially what happened, partly by historical accident, is that, between the sixteenth and the nineteenth centuries, the most advanced civilization in the world crashed into the shores of sub-Saharan Africa and the Americas, two regions that were, by European standards, incomparably primitive. In many of the tribes of southern Africa and the Americas, the natives had no numbers that went beyond one or two. The Europeans, increasingly skeptical and rationalistic in their outlook, became disdainful of cultures that insisted upon patterning behavior on the miraculousness of everyday life and in which one could converse with rocks, daily events were controlled by ancestral spirits, dancing and shouting made it rain, diseases could be cured by wearing masks, women could give birth to animals, and so on.

Southern Africa and the Americas were not the most primitive cultures in the world. Between the sixth and the fifteenth centuries, Africa saw the rise of the kingdoms of Ghana, Mali, and Songhai, which were large, rich in gold, and politically integrated. Foreigners frequently visited the trading centers of Benin and Kanem-Bornu. Undoubtedly it was a black African people who constructed the great monuments, including an ancient temple, in Zimbabwe. Parts of southern Africa enjoyed the benefits of Muslim literacy and learning. Ethiopia retained an ancient Christian civilization. In the Americas, the Maya, Inca, and Aztec civilizations were impressive for their sophisticated knowledge of the seasons and stars, an advanced calendar, elaborate techniques of weaving and ornamentation, and architectural brilliance that amazed the Spanish. Africa and the Americas were undoubtedly more developed than some of the monsoon forests of southeast Asia, some of the steppe and forest zones of northern Eurasia, and the islands off the coast of India and Australia, such as Tasmania and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, which were still in the paleolithic stage when Europeans arrived there in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Apart from the availability of natural resources, the main reason for the relative underdevelopment of Africa, the Americas, and many other parts of the world, compared with China, India, Europe, and the Arab world, seems to be geographical separation. Civilization is largely a product of cultural interaction and shared knowledge. Yet the Americas were cut off from the rest of the world by the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. Black Africa is largely partitioned from north Africa by the Sahara Desert. True, camels could be used to cross the desert with great difficulty, but the camel is not native to southern

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Africa. Camels only came into general use for desert journeys around the fourth century A.D. The Arabs were the first to use dromedaries imported from Asia for large-scale caravans across the Sahara. Similarly, American Indians did not enjoy the advantages either of the horse or cattle until the Spanish brought them from Europe; consequently, native tribes were compelled to use inefficient modes of transportation, such as llamas and domesticated dogs. "Other cultures could pick up things from traders and missionaries and foreign visitors," notes the historian Philip Curtin. "The sub-Saharan Africans, like some of the Indian tribes, had to invent everything for themselves."

Three things a society needs in order to rise above a meager subsistence level are the wheel, the plow, and a written language. The wheel, one of the decisive human inventions for improving the efficiency of labor, is one of the oldest of civilizational resources. Every advanced civilization depended on it, and its invention is usually credited to ancient Mesopotamia, where there is evidence of its use before 3500 B.C. But the wheel was unknown in virtually all of black Africa, and also in pre-Columbian America, although strangely enough the wheel did exist in Mexico where it was only used as a toy. The plow was an essential instrument for the human transition from a hunter-gatherer society to some form of settled agriculture; it was first used in ancient Sumeria around 3500 B.C. Virtually no community in the Americas or black Africa knew about the plow until Europeans introduced it in the modern era. Every generation builds upon the knowledge of its ancestors largely because of the invention of writing, which is a mechanism for storing and accumulating knowledge, without which societies are forced to rely on the foibles of memory. "The lack of writing," the African philosopher Kwasi Wiredu observes with characteristic understatement, "is a definite handicap in the preservation and enhancement of a philosophical tradition." Also first encountered in Sumeria around 3500 B.C., writing became the foundation for learning in both the East and the West. But with the exception of Mayan hieroglyphics, writing was unknown in the Americas, even to the relatively advanced Aztecs; the Incas frequently communicated through the use of knotted threads. In black Africa, literacy was confined to small enclaves: Islamic outposts such as Timbuktu, the Christian culture in Ethiopia.

It is impossible, even for scholars hostile to the West, to deny the civilization gap. Some black activists such as Aime Cesaire even seek to make a virtue out of necessity, declaring African superiority on the grounds of primitive chic. "Hurrah for those who never invented anything, who never explored anything, who never discovered anything." For some white and African American scholars, however, dif-

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ferent levels of civilizational accomplishment and specifically the low level of African development are sources of acute embarrassment. Consequently, many scholars attempt to deny the civilization gap, or they offer euphemisms to explain it away. Only a few historians, such as Philip Curtin and William McNeill, will say publicly that much of sub-Saharan Africa and the Americas was between one and four thousand years behind the West in technological development. McNeill is bold enough to state that a large number of peoples whom the Europeans encountered for the first time were virtually "still living in the stone age."

The Collapse of Environmentalism

Alexis de Tocqueville remarks that the historical results are usually beneficial when a civilizationally inferior power overwhelms a culturally superior power by force. The reason is that the barbaric victors can then acknowledge their cultural deficiencies and learn from the society they have subdued. For example, when the Romans supplanted the Greeks as the primary force in southern Europe, Romans acknowledged Greek cultural superiority, as suggested by the Roman poet Horace: "Captive Greece enslaved her fierce captor." Similarly, the primitive hordes from northern Europe who sacked Rome embraced over time the Christian faith and acquired, however partially, the essentials of Greco-Roman civilization. The Mongol swordsmen who overran China, India, Europe, and the Middle East inevitably encountered superior cultures and assimilated into them.

By contrast, the Europeans of the modern era were both the more advanced civilization and the conquering power, which resulted, as Tocqueville warned, in uninhibited arrogance on the part of the victors and the total degradation of the vanquished. Yet Europeans from ancient times were familiar with themes of civilizational superiority and had generally attributed them to climate—the theory we have called environmentalism. Racism developed when the environmental explanation was found by many Europeans to be untenable. As Winthrop Jordan documents in his classic study *White Over Black*, neither skin color nor lack of scientific and intellectual achievement could be plausibly blamed on the soil or the sun. Thus atmospheric theories fell into disrepute.

Along with the Arabs, many Europeans had argued that blackness derives from the sun's heat. The eminent naturalist Comte de Buffon insisted at the end of the eighteenth century that Africans were darkened by the sun and then passed on blackness as a hereditary feature to their descendants. Buffon predicted that if Negroes were brought

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to cold countries, their skin, over a few generations, would lighten. It did not take very long for Europeans to realize the error of that assumption. Europeans also noted, with some chagrin, that the darkest people in Africa were the Wolof living near Cape Verde, not the Africans nearest the Equator. It came as a further surprise that Negro children born in Europe did not come out white. Nor did whites who lived and worked in the West Indies and other tropical zones turn black. When the English and French in America went north, where the climate was cooler, they were confident that they would find Indians with lighter skin; again, this expectation was proven wrong. Many Europeans who followed the path of Columbus to the Americas also believed that the primitive condition of the native Indians was largely the result of their living close to the line of the Equator. As Englishmen and Frenchmen moved northward, many of them expected to see Indian civilization improve in temperate and cooler climates. This turned out not to be the case. In some respects, the pattern was reversed. The most advanced Indian civilization was centered in the relatively hot environs of Mexico City; as the French moved north into what is now Canada, they found nothing of comparable sophistication.

It is important to recognize that Europeans were entirely convinced, based on the Bible, that all humans were simultaneously created by God and had inhabited the planet for the same amount of time. How to explain why one people had palaces and cathedrals and technology to explore the seas and the heavens, while other peoples rowed about in canoes and shot blow-darts at each other? Europeans found it difficult to give an explanation for why, over the same period, one society seemed to have accomplished so much and other societies so little. Europeans have also had a long tradition of regarding noble and base qualities to be hereditary. This was part of the justification for a hereditary monarchy and aristocracy. In much of European literature we see suggestions that physical form is revealing, if not determinative, of qualities of character and intelligence. For all these reasons, it was not difficult for many Europeans to biologize their perceptions of the civilizational inferiority of other cultures.

Many Europeans began to assert with increasing frequency and confidence that the attributes of race, color, and human achievement are intrinsic. Some people are simply superior to others by nature. And since race and color appear to be hereditary, and since Europeans could not help noticing that they were white and the people they considered barbarian were dark skinned, they concluded that there must be some relationship between physical attributes, or race, and civilizational achievement. They came increasingly to believe that

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these racial inequities must be dictated by nature or history or even by God. Thus it was that European racism came into the world.

The Nature of Superiority

We see evidence of racism, complete with its rejection of environmentalism, in David Hume's famous description of barbarism in Africa and around the world. Hume examines the possibility that black inferiority is not inherited but imposed by slavery. He dismisses that explanation on the grounds that the descendants of slaves and "low people" all over Europe have proved that they can rise above their ancestral histories and achieve literary, mathematical, and scientific distinction, whereas the backwardness of black Africans seems to him comprehensive and apparently ineradicable. "In Jamaica," Hume writes, "they talk of one Negro as a man of parts and learning, but it is likely he is admired for very slender accomplishments, like a parrot, who speaks a few words plainly." Similarly, Immanuel Kant is skeptical that black inferiority is the sole product of unfortunate circumstance. "Among the whites," he observes, "people constantly rise up from the lowest rabble and acquire esteem through their superior gifts."

But for the classic expression of European racism we must turn to the French diplomat and scholar Joseph Arthur de Gobineau, who is today, if he is known at all, considered the embodiment of wickedness. He was a friend and respected correspondent of Tocqueville and in some respects one of the most learned exponents of the zeitgeist of the nineteenth century. Gobineau was also an acquaintance of Josiah Nott, an apologist for slavery who publicized Gobineau's views in the American South, and of the philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche and the composer Richard Wagner, both of whom shared Gobineau's love of aristocracy of birth and his hatred of equality. Gobineau was an elitist and an eccentric, but his racism made him a man of his time—it elevated him to high posts and made him widely admired. Moreover, his influence would prove lasting: in the twentieth century, Gobineau was one of Adolf Hitler's favorite authors, and his works were popular textbooks in the schools of Nazi Germany.

Nowhere is the racist worldview more comprehensively stated than in Gobineau's *Inequality of Human Races*, published in 1853. In it, Gobineau drew on the discoveries made by Orientalists such as William Jones that there was a common Aryan source for Indo-European languages such as Sanskrit, Persian, Greek, Latin, and German. Gobineau argued that the highest aspirations of humanity were embodied in these Aryans, a single family of Germanic peoples who had infused European and even Asian culture with its brilliance and vigor.

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Gobineau writes that the existence of advanced and backward races—the former who live by codes of civility, ingenuity, and technological comfort, the latter who live by laws of force at a subsistence level—proves that some races are naturally superior to others. This superiority, Gobineau stresses, applies to races, not to individuals.

> I will not wait for the friends of equality to show me such and such passages in books written by missionaries or sea captains, who declare that some Wolof is a fine carpenter, some Hottentot a good servant, that some Kaffir dances and plays the violin, that some Bambara knows arithmetic. . . . Let us leave these puerilities, and compare together not men but groups.

If environmentalism is true, Gobineau asks, why have some groups endowed with rich natural resources nevertheless failed to produce a comparable civilization to that of Europe? "So the brain of a Huron Indian contains in an undeveloped form an intellect which is absolutely the same as that of the Englishman or the Frenchman!" he claims. "Why, then, in the course of the ages, has he not invented printing or steam power?" Gobineau suggests that "nowhere is the soil more fertile, the climate milder, than in certain parts of America. There is an abundance of great rivers, the gulfs, the bays, the harbours, are large, deep, magnificent, and innumerable. Precious metals can be dug out almost at the surface of the ground." And the same is true for large parts of Africa. So where, Gobineau asks, is the American Indian or African version of Caesar, Newton, Charlemagne, and Homer?

The equality of the races could be expected to produce a rough civilizational equality among cultures, Gobineau writes. "Early in the world's history, they would have gladdened the face of the earth with a crowd of civilizations, all flourishing at the same time." Gobineau argues that the historical record refutes such political expectations. In fact, he contends, it is whites who have developed modern civilization, while other people have proved at best adept imitators. Civilization, Gobineau argues, depends on more than mere mimicry. "No one has a real part in any civilization until he is able to make progress by himself, without direction from others." In rhetoric that contemporary readers are sure to find troubling, Gobineau defies his readers to cite one example of a black civilization satisfying these criteria, or even one truly great scientific invention accomplished solely by a black African. "I will wait long for the work to be finished," he says, "I merely ask that it may be begun. But it has never been begun; it has never even been attempted."

In the twentieth century, many of these racist ideas would come under ferocious assault, both on intellectual and moral grounds.

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Eventually the anti-racist view would prevail, and racism would be redefined to suit the new politics of a new age. But it is important to recover the origin of racism, because it teaches us that racism had a beginning both in space and in time. Whatever its later career, racism began as part of a rational project to understand human differences. Racism originated as an assertion of Western cultural superiority that was eventually proclaimed to be intrinsic. From the ancient world we get a glimpse of societies that respected nature rather than sought to subdue and conquer it, that were aware of physical differences but attached no importance to them—perhaps a model for a better society than the one we have now. In any event, there is no historical warrant for the extreme pessimism that holds that racism has always existed and will always exist. Although we may find it painful to read what people in earlier centuries had to say about others, it remains profoundly consoling to know that racism had a beginning, because then it becomes possible to envision its end.

Peter Shaw

1936–1995

Contributor, THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR

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Monday Morning

BILLY COLLINS

The complacency of this student, late
for the final, who chews her pen for an hour,
who sits in her sunny chair,
with a container of coffee and an orange,
a cuckoo swinging freely in her green mind
as if on some drug dissolved,
mingling to give her a wholly ancient rush.
She dreams a little and she fears the mark
she might well get—a catastrophe—
as a frown darkens the hauteur of her light brow.
The orange peels and her bright senior ring
make her think of some procession of classmates,
walking across the wide campus, without a sound,
stalled for the passing of her sneakered feet
over the lawn, to silent pals and steins,
dorm of nobody who would bother to pull an A or care.

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The End of the Book?

Some Perspectives on Media Change

Elizabeth L. Eisenstein

"CLOSING THE BOOK ON BOOKS"—so ran a headline in the *Washington Post* last December over a review (by Jonathan Yardley) of Sven Birkerts's *The Gutenberg Elegies.* Author and reviewer agree that similar dirges have become increasingly frequent. Birkerts cites Alvin Kernan's *Death of Literature* as a case in point. Kernan, in turn, mentions many other relevant titles. In the 1960s, electronic mass media, radio, film, and television were singled out as being chiefly responsible for the book's demise. At present we are more likely to hear about personal computers, data banks, and cyberspace. But however varied the diagnosis, the gloomy prognosis remains much the same.

"The demanding world of reading is being shoved aside in favor of the easy one of audio and video," writes Yardley. Birkerts's formulation is more grandiose and sweeping:

> As Marshall McLuhan originally theorized (and as Kernan has reaffirmed) we are in the midst of an epoch-making transition; . . . the societal shift from print-based to electronic communications is as consequential for culture as was the shift instigated by Gutenberg's invention of movable type. . . . If this fact has not yet struck home . . . it is, in part, because the news of the change is still being delivered slowly, piecemeal, by way of the entrenched agencies of print. This circuit-driven renovation is happening in every sector on every level and the momentum will not slacken until the electronic web has woven itself into every potentially profitable crevice. Ten, fifteen years from now the world will be nothing like what we remember, nothing much like what we experience now. . . . Our relationship to the space-time axis will be very different from what we have lived with for millennia.

It should be noted that we have not lived with the printed book "for millennia" or even for one millennium. During the centuries that ensued after Gutenberg's invention, moreover, our experience of

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"space-time" has scarcely remained unchanged. Indeed the feeling of being "in the midst of an epoch-making transition" serves to link our generation with several that have gone before. In 1836, Alfred de Musset described how his generation experienced the aftermath of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars: "behind them, a past forever destroyed; before them, the first gleams of the future and between these two worlds . . . a troubled sea filled with wreckage . . . in a word: the present." Later on, Henry Adams wrote about being abruptly severed from the experience of his ancestors by the Boston and Albany Railroad, the first Cunard steamer, and the stringing of telegraph wires. In the early twentieth century, Samuel Eliot Morison said the same thing about the internal combustion engine, nuclear fission, and Dr. Freud.

Is the idea that a new age has dawned with the advent of new media also embedded in our past? To place current attitudes in some sort of historical perspective, it may be helpful to consider reactions to previous changes affecting media. I have recently been surveying such reactions, beginning with early comments on the advent of movable type. For the sake of brevity, this essay will set aside the first centuries of printing and will consider only the later interval that saw steam-powered iron machinery replace the wooden handpress.

The industrialization of papermaking and the use of iron cylinder presses harnessed to steam (first used by the *London Times* in 1814) provoked much comment. For the most part, however, the new machinery led to the use of new metaphors rather than to any major alteration of previous themes. Although printing was more likely to be described as a "mighty engine of progress" than as a "divine art" in the nineteenth century, it was still regarded by both its friends and enemies in much the same way as it had been during previous centuries. To be sure, attitudes were sharply polarized, but this was less because of the industrialization of papermaking and printing than because of the political upheavals associated with the Atlantic revolutions.

In his reassertion of the principles of the Declaration of the Rights of Man of 1789, Tom Paine attacked Edmund Burke for "laboring in vain to stop the progress of knowledge." "It has never yet been discovered how to make a man unknow his knowledge or unthink his thoughts." "Ignorance is of a peculiar nature; once dispelled it is impossible to reestablish it." Paine's views were shared by his friends among the French revolutionaries, such as Condorcet, who placed Gutenberg's invention at the beginning of a new world historical age. Printing, the revolutionaries agreed, had set in motion an irreversible process that was destined to end a royal monopoly of power as well as

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a priestly monopoly of learning. This position was adopted by most of the early nineteenth-century opponents of Metternich and the Bourbon Restoration. Societies for press freedom were formed; all of the written constitutions that were proposed by Liberal parties throughout the Continent during the nineteenth century reasserted the freedom of the press clause in the 1789 Declaration of the Rights of Man. The cause of a free press became a liberal shibboleth (and remains one even now).

At the opposite pole were the conservatives and reactionaries who supported the so-called party of order. They regarded the Enlightenment as a prelude to the Terror and held printing responsible for the spread of poisonous Jacobinical and atheistical doctrines. The Catholic Church, which had viewed printing with suspicion ever since Luther's day, took the lead in opposing doctrines favoring freedom of opinion and of the press. In 1791 when the Pope denounced the Civil Constitution of the Clergy he singled out the freedom of the press clause in the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen for special condemnation. Since God had limited man's liberty by forbidding him to commit evil, the papal argument went, liberty of thought was wrongly described as an imprescriptible right. This position was emphatically reiterated later in the century by Pius IX in his Syllabus of Errors of 1864, which pronounced anathema against every doctrine that was cherished by nineteenth-century liberals.

Long before the 1860s, however, the Catholic royalist reaction had received a decisive setback in France. The high-water mark was reached in 1830 when Charles X (the last Bourbon king) issued the repressive Four Ordinances, one of which was aimed at closing down the newspaper and periodical press. These measures set off the July Revolution, which saw printers and journalists playing prominent roles and which resulted in the accession of Louis Philippe, the Orleanist king.

As a constitutional monarch, Louis Philippe tried, unsuccessfully, to find a middle path between Right and Left. In 1792, he fought on the side of the revolutionaries at Valmy and Jemappes. His anti-clerical views linked him with the Voltaireans. He also agreed with the views of Condorcet on printing and its effects. Writing in the 1800s while traveling in America, the future Citizen King described the advent of printing as the most decisive of all historical events. It had undermined feudalism and advanced equality, he wrote, adding that "the European governments are operating under a delusion if they think that they can hold back the irreversible changes printing is bringing in its wake."

Once he was made king, however, Louis Philippe endured the

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attacks of republicans and ultra royalists alike for only a few years before he felt obliged to reinstitute press controls. But Orleanist press laws proved difficult to enforce. As had been the case in Georgian England in the days of John Wilkes, trials by jury often resulted in the vindication of the accused and invariably led to publicity unfavorable to the beleaguered government. When the Orleanists were overthrown in 1848, the staffs of two journals took over the provisional government of France, and freedom of the press was once again proclaimed—only to give way to new press controls under Napoleon III.

Not until the collapse of the Second Empire and the installation of the Third Republic in the 1870s did the struggle over press laws end in favor of the anti-clerical Liberals. In the 1870s, Liberal parties elsewhere on the Continent were victorious. The last decades of the nineteenth century saw the movement for a free press finally prevail. This was a mixed blessing in the somewhat jaundiced view of Carlton J. H. Hayes, the professor of history at Columbia who was a Catholic convert and who became U.S. ambassador to Franco's Spain. In *A Generation of Materialism, 1871–1900,* Hayes described how a free press, mass literacy, and popular journalism went together with bellicose nationalism, imperialist adventures, and ever more destructive wars. (It should be noted, however, that the cause of peace has scarcely been advanced when press controls have been reinstituted by totalitarian regimes.)

On the Continent, Enlightenment doctrines that favored printing as an instrument of progress were associated with the struggle against clerical influence. Across the Channel, contestation took a somewhat different form. There the revolutionary aftermath had seen a Tory government impose new heavy duties on paper and periodicals. Enlightenment themes were revitalized, and the praise of printing took on new life as philosophical radicals, liberal reformers, book publishers, and newspaper editors combined to campaign against the Tory taxes.

The stark contrast between ignorance and knowledge that had been drawn by Tom Paine was repeatedly evoked in the campaign. Taxes on printed materials were described as "taxes on knowledge," and a Society for the Promotion of Useful Knowledge was formed. Working-class leaders and middle-class reformers together insisted that free access to the printed word was indispensable to the welfare of the nation. Benthamites and Malthusians were especially zealous on this point. They believed that ignorance was chiefly responsible for the misery of the laboring poor and that education was the best remedy for the nation's ills. Once they had been taught about the principles of population, workers would understand the need for

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family planning and exhibit more self-control. Even alcoholism could be eliminated, it was argued, when the public's thirst for news could be requited without workingmen having to go to taverns to look at newspapers.

By 1836 the heavy duties had been reduced, a legal penny press came into existence, and middle-class members of the Useful Knowlege society were satisfied. But working-class spokesmen found that their illegal untaxed operations suffered from competition with the new legal penny press. It made the rich man's paper cheaper but the poor man's paper dearer, according to complaints. Leaders of the Chartist movement continued to campaign for a completely unstamped press. In so doing, the Chartists perpetuated Enlightenment slogans. Henry Hetherington, editor of the *Poor Man's Guardian*, for example, defiantly substituted for the official red stamp a black one, which bore the emblem of a handpress and was inscribed with the epigraph KNOWLEDGE IS POWER.

This use of Francis Bacon's seventeenth-century phrase shows how attitudes that had been shaped in the age of the handpress tended to be perpetuated in the age of new machinery. In *Sartor Resartus*, Thomas Carlyle, in his inimitable style, reasserted the views of Condorcet. He who first shortened the labors of copyists by the device of movable type, wrote Carlyle, was disbanding hired armies, cashiering most kings, and creating a whole new democratic world. In 1843, Charles Dickens described printing as the only product of civilization that was necessary to the existence of free men. The press, he said, was the fountain of knowledge, the bulwark of freedom, the founder and preserver of free states.

Carlyle later opposed the extension of democracy, and Dickens expressed bitter thoughts about feeding a relentless machine. When sounding alarms about the effects of increased output, nineteenth-century commentators were still playing variations on long-familiar themes. Concern about the sheer proliferation of printed matter and about markets clogged with useless materials had been expressed in previous centuries. In the seventeenth century, Sir Thomas Browne complained that too many books were being produced simply "to benefit the trade and mystery of typographers." In the next century, Alexander Pope presented his apocalyptic vision of the flood of printer's ink that was spreading darkness across the land.

Nevertheless, statistics were on the side of those who felt victimized by an unprecedented onslaught of trash after industrialization. "The tawdry novels, hideous and ignoble, which flare in the bookshelves of our railway stations" offended Matthew Arnold's sensibilities (much as the contents of airport bookshelves offend us right

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now). The late Victorian age, according to G. M. Young, saw a public, which had once been alert and responsible, sink toward an "easily excited, easily satisfied state of barbarism and childhood"—a sorry state that was fostered by an irresponsible press.

The notion that the press might contribute to barbarism, outbreaks of war fever, and childlike ignorance presented a sharp contrast to the expectations of members of the Useful Knowledge society. For the most part, nineteenth-century liberals continued to pin their hopes on improvements in printing processes and on the continued expansion of a reading public. John Stuart Mill worried about the effect of a mass market on traditional values, about the spread of conformity, the abuses of literacy, and the estrangement of the intellectual. Yet he also welcomed all "the modern facilities of communication" and never doubted the value of institutions that guaranteed freedom of the press.

Some nineteenth-century observers regarded the proliferation of printed materials as a mixed blessing. Others viewed it with less ambivalence as an unmitigated curse. Opponents of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution looked with special favor on those very distant golden ages that were untroubled by the output of printers. Conservatives and reactionaries expressed a new appreciation of preliterate folkways, unwritten laws, oral myths, and legends. Catholic royalists valued medieval cathedrals, manuscript illumination, and monkish scribes. Indeed, many of the cultural artifacts that were celebrated during the Gothic revival had been uncontaminated by print.

In his *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, Edmund Burke had complained that the age of chivalry was dead: "The age of chivalry is gone. That of sophisters, economists and calculators has succeeded and the glory of Europe is extinguished forever." Soon thereafter the age of chivalry received a literary resurrection in the novels of Sir Walter Scott. Among Scott's many Continental admirers, the young Victor Hugo deserves special mention for his celebrated discussion of printing and its effects. An entire chapter is devoted to the topic in Hugo's *Notre Dame de Paris*. The Gothic cathedral with its magnificent stained glass and stone sculpture is set in that novel against the printed dictionary, and the reader is invited to lament the triumph of pedantry over poetry.

What the utilitarians viewed as useful knowledge was scornfully dismissed as shallow and one-dimensional by a new generation of romantics who were steeped in German philosophy and valued the imaginative visionary above the precise engineer. Dry-as-dust pedants or petty bookkeepers might pride themselves on their mastery of facts

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and figures; deeper truths were available to those who tapped the wellsprings of folk wisdom. But not even folk wisdom could escape the intrusion of market values; cheap editions of twice-told tales that had once circulated in the form of ballads were being recycled and rewritten for mass consumption, ultimately degenerating into kitsch. Once the aristocratic patron had been displaced, a cash nexus contaminated all aesthetic endeavors, or so it was held.

At the same time, the flourishing state of print culture in the nineteenth century enabled the author to achieve unprecedented popularity as a new culture hero. One thinks of the people waiting on the dock to learn about the fate of Little Nell or the worshipful crowds walking behind Victor Hugo's hearse. (Do recent verdicts on the "death of the author" merely imply that no author's funeral will ever again be so well attended?) Carlyle's "hero as a man of letters" with his "copy rights and copy wrongs" was a by-product of those very same impersonal market forces that most authors claimed to despise. The fortunes of the serialized fiction writer, for example, hinged on the new technology employed by newspaper publishers. But nineteenth-century literati continued to wax nostalgic for bardic poets, scribal arts, and noble patrons. Even while feeding the voracious machine, they denounced it with all the fury of the Luddite.

Perhaps the most damning description of print culture in an industrial age was offered by Balzac's *Les Illusions Perdues.* The novel begins with a view of the world turned upside down by the French Revolution. First a nobleman and then a priest are forced to toil for an illiterate peasant turned provincial printer. The latter makes a fortune during the Terror by employing his former masters as hired hands. The old villain is too much of a skinflint to equip his presses properly. He accumulates money by hoarding and by starving the members of his household. (The portrait is not dissimilar from that drawn by Erasmus of Aldus Manutius's miserly father-in-law, the publisher Andrea Torresani of Asola.) The scene then moves to the great city of Paris, which is depicted as a kind of hell with market forces viewed in a lurid light. The miserly artisan with his wooden handpress has been left behind in the provinces. In Paris, the iron laws of capitalism have taken hold. Publishers investing in meretricious best-sellers protect their investments by bribery and blackmail. They arrange for corrupt critics to praise worthless books and to denounce or ignore praiseworthy ones. They force poor authors to choose between slavery to the system or starving on their own.

Balzac's portrayal of conniving publishers and desperate Grub Street authors is too often taken at face value as a realistic rendering of the literary marketplace in nineteenth-century Paris. Some allow-

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ance needs to be made for the author's personal experience as a failed printer and publisher and also for the partisan politics of the day. Balzac was a lifelong admirer of Sir Walter Scott. One of his first successful novels, *Les Chouans*, glorified a counter-revolutionary uprising.

The long history of friction between authors and publishers also needs to be taken into account. From the days of Erasmus down to the present, there is scarcely any writer who has not at one time or another expressed detestation of the cold-blooded, calculating, profit-seeking publisher who wrings the last penny from starving writers while hastily marketing inferior goods. It is interesting to note that there are references in *Illusions Perdues* to a distant golden age of handpress printing when Aldus Manutius, the Estiennes, and the Elseviers plied their trade. Here as elsewhere the nineteenth-century romantic imagination tended to set the best of the past against the worst of the present—to exaggerate the role of the aristocratic patron and to play down the market forces that affected literature before industrialization.

Horror stories about the greed and knavery of early printers and publishers are not difficult to find. Along with Aldus's miserly father-in-law, another celebrated early printer, the pioneering atlas publisher, W. J. Blaeu (who was associated with the dawn of the so-called golden age of Dutch publishing) provoked a contemporary to complain: "He sets more store by his own good than by the general good, is more concerned for gold than for honor, and thinks of nothing but profit." The Elseviers, perhaps the last to represent the Dutch golden age, were frequently accused of harsh dealings—in one instance, of letting a widow and orphan starve. The Dutch were especially likely targets for such accusations. They had been caricatured during the Anglo-Dutch wars as dull accountants and avaricious merchants. The caricature was reinforced by eighteenth-century French literati who resented having to deal with extraterritorial publishers. The mythical Amsterdam publisher who did not know how to read but made millions from Frenchmen who knew how to write was immortalized by Voltaire.

In the days of Voltaire, artisans were still manning wooden presses and papermaking had not yet been mechanized. Yet literati were still convinced that they were witnessing the onset of an iron age of commercialism. It is noteworthy that the historian Robert Darnton finds that Balzac's portrayal fits eighteenth-century publishing, although the conniving publishers and desperate hacks in Darnton's studies belong to the pre-revolutionary and pre-industrial age. There is little to differentiate Darnton's description of the cut-throat business of

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publishing from Balzac's, except that Darnton's publishers work outside French borders and Balzac's are more concerned with receiving favorable notice in the Parisian daily press.

Mention of the daily press brings up one development that deserves special treatment. Up to this point, I have followed one of Carlyle's essays and dealt with a "huge froth ocean of printed speech loosely called literature" without distinguishing between books and newspapers. Such distinctions seem relatively unimportant when considering such matters as cognitive progress, popularization, and censorship. To be sure, publishers were less likely to be prosecuted for costly volumes aimed at elites than for cheap papers that presumably stirred up the rabble. Yet efforts to control all printed output characterized authoritarian regimes in the past and still mark totalitarian regimes in the present century. Nineteenth-century liberals objected to the Index of Prohibited Books as well as to censorship of periodicals and newspapers. (A difficult book, not a readable pamphlet, has led to the recent death sentence imposed upon Salman Rushdie.) Furthermore, distinctions between books and periodicals were themselves often blurred by the publishing of books in installments and their serialization in newspapers.

Nevertheless, even a sketchy account must make room for the special niche occupied by journalism. Robert Owen described the newspaper as "the most powerful engine for good or evil that has been brought into action by human creation." John Stuart Mill, reflecting on the "tyranny" exerted by public opinion, observed that the masses were no longer taking their opinions from dignitaries in Church or State. Nor were they being guided by books. "Their thinking is done for them by men, much like themselves, through the newspapers." Indeed, the end of the book was first proclaimed, not by recent commentators on electronic media, but by nineteenth-century critics of the newspaper press. In *The Decline of the West*, Oswald Spengler associated the invention of printing with the birth of Faustian Man. But he also asserted that, just as the age of the sermon had given way to the age of the book, so too the age of the book had in turn been superseded by the age of the newspaper. As we shall see, he was echoing previous observations made by Carlyle and Louis Blanc.

The increased significance assigned to the newspaper press owed much to improvements in papermaking and print technology as well as to the French Revolution, especially to the explosion of Parisian print journalism in 1789. But views of print journalism had also been shaped by developments that predate 1789—going back at least to sixteenth-century Venice where Aretino, the so-called father of jour-

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nalism, had pioneered in exploiting printed publicity for the purposes of blackmail. Satires on journalism were familiar to London playgoers in Ben Jonson's time. In the aftermath of the English Civil War, an official serving Charles II complained: "The press makes the multitude too familiar with the actions and counsels of their superiors. . . . It gives them not only an itch but a kind of right and license to be meddling with the government."

Two separate accounts—one written by a Frenchman, the other by a German—appeared in the early 1700s, proclaiming that the century of the journal had dawned. During the course of the eighteenth century, the trade of the journalist was often discussed, rarely in favorable terms. (At that time, the term *journalist* was subject to confusion since it designated both the respectable editors of learned journals as well as the disreputable scandalmongers who traded in gossip and blackmail.) The philosophes were generally contemptuous. According to Diderot, journals were designed for readers too lazy to read books; journalism was "a sad and servile trade."

Among the radical political activists who admired John Wilkes, Sam Adams, and Tom Paine, however, the journalists were seen to pursue a higher calling as "tribunes of the people." For those who opposed George III, the newspaper press was "the Tyrant's foe and the people's friend." It was assigned the same sort of power over the public mind that television newscasts are assigned today. It was the ideal instrument for raising the consciousness of "the nation outdoors." Jacques Pierre Brissot asserted that "without newspapers and gazettes, the American Revolution would never have occurred." During the French Revolution, journalism served Brissot (and Mirabeau, Marat, Desmoulins, and many others) as a "prelude to power." In 1848, the same theme was replayed when the staffs of two journals took over the provisional government of France.

In the aftermath of the Atlantic revolutions, observers began to consider the possibility that the newspaper press constituted a new organ of the body politic. Probably the most influential phrasemaker in this regard was Thomas Carlyle, who wrote that journalists "are now our true kings and clergy" and that "the true Church of England lies in the editors of our newspapers." Carlyle's most resonant passages on journalism occur in his *History of the French Revolution*, where he described the explosion of newsprint in the streets of Paris in 1789 in a section that began: "Great is journalism; every able editor is now a ruler of the world."

Carlyle's phrases were picked up and translated into French by Louis Blanc for use in *his* history of the French Revolution. Writing after his own career as a journalist-turned-deputy had come to an

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end, Blanc produced a much-cited chapter on the emergence of journalism as a new power in human affairs. Books were suited to quieter times, he wrote, paraphrasing Carlyle, but we are now in an era when today devours yesterday and must be devoured by tomorrow. And then comes the celebrated formula: The age of books is closed; the age of the journal is at hand.

It was Carlyle, again, who attributed to Edmund Burke the idea that newspaper reporters belonged to a new Fourth Estate: "Burke said that there were Three Estates in Parliament; but, in the Reporters' Gallery yonder, there sat a *Fourth Estate* more important far than they all. It is not a figure of speech, or a witty saying; it is a literal fact—very momentous to us in these times. . . . Whoever can speak, speaking now to the whole nation, becomes a power, a branch of government, with inalienable weight in law making, in all acts of authority."

It is not certain whether Burke ever did point to the reporters' gallery and coin the phrase. But it certainly did catch on by the 1820s. It was repeatedly employed by liberal politicians such as Macaulay and Brougham and has remained current in Anglo-American parlance ever since those days. An American variation on the theme was supplied in the 1950s by the title of Douglass Cater's book *The Fourth Branch of Government.* Cater prefaced his work with an epigraph from James Reston: "The nineteenth century was the era of the novelist. The twentieth century is the era of the journalist." One wonders why observers in the Western world feel called on to make such pronouncements. From the days of Daniel Defoe to those of Norman Mailer, novelist and journalist have coexisted; not infrequently the same person has assumed both roles.

By the mid-nineteenth century, in any event, the journalist was already assuming a self-congratulatory posture. The idea of a Fourth Estate had been taken over by the leader writers for the *London Times*: "Daily appealing to the enlightened force of public opinion; anticipating when possible the march of events, standing upon the breach between past and future, extending its survey to the horizon of the world, journalism was now truly an estate of the realm more powerful than any other estate"—so ran a *Times* editorial of 1852. Some writers accepted this appraisal at face value; others made it a target for savage satire. In *Pendennis,* Thackeray described the awe inspired by passing a London newspaper office at night with its lights ablaze: "Look at that! There she is, the great engine who never sleeps. She has ambassadors in every quarter of the world; her couriers upon every road."

Trollope managed to deflate the overblown pretensions of journalists in pages of mock epic prose: "From Mount Olympus issued

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forth 50,000 nightly edicts for the governance of the subject nation. Issued forth the only infallible bulls for the guidance of British souls and bodies. Self-nominated self-consecrated as pontiff, never wrong ever vigilant and all knowing, from the palaces of St Petersburg to the cabins of Connaught; nothing escapes him." Readers (or viewers) of Trollope's *The Warden* will be familiar with inhumane and amoral behavior attributed to the reporter for the *Times* (or the *Jupiter*, as Trollope called it). The power attributed to the newspaper by the novelist was entirely irresponsible. It was accountable to no one, except perhaps to the advertisers who hinged rates to circulation figures.

The emergence of an independent newspaper press, which provoked so much comment in the nineteenth century, was linked to the replacement of government subsidies by commercial advertising—a phenomenon well advanced in England before it caught on across the Channel and one that Tory ministers regarded with dismay. According to D. C. Somervell: "In 1795 the publisher of the *Times* agreed to support the government for a pension of 600 pounds. His successor in 1815 would have laughed at such a proposal." Somervell also takes note of Lord Liverpool's complaint to Castlereagh that no paper any longer accepted money from the government. When their support was most necessary, they could not be bribed. Instead of begging favors from the government, they had become sycophants of the public. Later, of course, radicals and socialists would argue that reliance on advertisers, far from guaranteeing the independence of the press, made it all the more dependent on the special interests of big business. To a twentieth-century Laborite, journals such as the *London Times* were sycophants not of the public but of corporate wealth.

The intrusion of commercial interests into literature, long bemoaned by literati, was especially galling to nineteenth-century fiction writers, who depended on newspaper publicity and found themselves competing for space, not only with headline-grabbing politicians, but also with vulgar commodities. In his preface to *Mademoiselle de Maupin* (1835), Théophile Gautier expressed savage indignation at the idea of having his work advertised along with elastic belts, crinoline collars, patent nipple nursing bottles, and recipes for toothaches. He complained that the public's appetite for scandal was being so whetted by reports of sensational trials that "the reader refuses to be caught save by a book baited with a small corpse in the first stages of putrefaction. Men are not as unlike fishes as some people seem to think." Although many writers expressed disgust at the vulgar sensationalism of others, few could afford to abandon the hope of creating a sensation themselves.

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Novelists were not alone in expressing concern about the effects of sensational journalism. Much as early printers had denounced one another for sharp dealing, so too did newspapers hurl accusations at one another: "squirt of filthy water," "sloppail of corruption," and other such epithets scarcely dignified the trade. Moralists persisted, as they had for centuries, deploring the public preference for the salacious over the edifying tale. And as is the case even now, doctors became alarmed over the deterioration of the nation's mental health. A physician named Isaac Ray published a book entitled *Mental Hygiene* in 1863, in which he asserted that "no single incident of civilization has contributed so much to maintain the mental activity of modern times as the art of printing; and at no period since its invention have its benefits and its evils been more widely diffused." Ray went on to express concern about the effects of this diffusion and noted, among other worries, the adverse effects of crime reporting on the national psyche: "The details of a disgusting criminal trial, exposing the darkest aspects of our nature, find an audience that no court-room less than a hemisphere could hold."

On such issues, nineteenth-century opinions and present-day attitudes do not seem far apart. Although different mass media are being targeted, the complaints are much the same: the ubiquity of sex and violence; intrusive commercials; sycophancy to mass taste; quasi-hypnotic power over human minds. The book is no longer seen to be succumbing to the newspaper (although it is still believed to be outmoded). It is now the newspaper's turn to succumb to television. Print journalism is already beginning to be viewed with the sort of nostalgia previously reserved for the early days of the wooden handpress—as the best of the past continues to be set against the worst of the present.

I've devoted considerable space to the newspaper press, partly because it wrongly signaled the death of the book to some nineteenth-century observers and also because I wanted to emphasize certain aspects of print culture that tend to be overlooked at present. Take, for example, the widespread acceptance of Marshall McLuhan's opinion that "linear, sequential" modes of thought are fostered by printing. This view unaccountably neglects to consider the non-linear, non-sequential format of stories presented in our daily newspapers. Twentieth-century painters experimenting with collage techniques may well have been influenced by the layout of front pages. Exposure to newsprint has probably accustomed successive generations to the juxtaposition of oddly assorted items.

Marshall McLuhan's *Gutenberg Galaxy* justified *its* non-linear presentation with reference to the field theories of modern physics.

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Given its unconventional format and its substitution of headlines for chapter titles, the influence of the newspaper may be more to the point. Its author's special training not in electromagnetic theory but in English literary studies also needs to be taken into consideration. To be well versed in literary criticism in the 1960s was to be predisposed against historical narratives regardless of other trends. Other anti-historical influences were also at work; Catholic theology, for example. McLuhan's treatment seems to me to owe rather more to St. Augustine than the author was prepared to admit. The sequential approach of the chronicler is, after all, relevant only to the corrupt and time-bound City of Man. The City of God exists outside historical time; all the events that unfold on earth are simultaneously present in the mind of God.

That Catholic theology is not without significance in media analysis is shown not only in the work of McLuhan, who was a Catholic convert, but also in the work of Walter Ong, who is a Jesuit priest. Unlike the Lutherans who hailed printing as God's highest act of grace, Catholic scholars are more likely to remind us that God produced the Incarnation—His truly highest act of grace—in the age of scribes. Thus Ong writes (in *The Presence of the Word*):

> God entered human history at the precise time when . . . His entrance would have the greatest opportunity to endure and flower. . . . The believer finds it providential that divine revelation let down roots into human culture . . . after the alphabet was devised but before print had overgrown oral structures and before electronic culture had further obscured the basic nature of the word.

(One wonders whether those evangelical preachers who now reach millions of listeners by using the electronic Church would agree that the basic nature of the Word was being obscured.)

For Father Ong, in any event, the age of the scribe was especially privileged for having contained the Incarnation. As already noted, the same age was seen to contain other blessings when the Gothic revival was at its height. Stained glass and illuminated parchments were celebrated even while the colorless and soulless world machine of Enlightenment deists was condemned. The romantic indictment of the age of reason has been preserved intact in McLuhan's *Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man.* But the arguments that had once been aimed at Voltaire and his followers have been transferred by McLuhan to printing and its effects—with anomalous results. After all, the printed word achieved an unrivaled preeminence when the romantic movement was at its height. How McLuhan's favorite literary artists escaped being contaminated by the all-envelop-

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ing effects of typography remains to be explained. Isaac Newton's presumably impoverished single vision is attributed to print culture; whereas William Blake's prophetic imagination is not. Yet surely print played as important a role in the work of the poet and engraver as in that of the mathematical physicist.

As many critics have already noted, the enveloping effects of print are especially apparent in the idiosyncratic formulations of McLuhan himself. He was an omnivorous reader and crammed his text with citations taken from a vast variety of other books. Despite his affinity with nineteenth-century romanticists, he lacked the historical imagination of a Carlyle or a Michelet and made no effort to resurrect the multidimensional rich texture of life as it was lived in the past. Typographic man seems to suffer from the very ailment his creator purports to describe: emerging as an unconvincing and abstract construct assembled by means of scissors and paste.

Scissors and paste are now outmoded; the integrity of the codex is being threatened, and blocks of text get moved by punching keys. Yet the views held by previous generations cannot be deleted as easily as can words upon a screen. Western attitudes that have survived for so long are likely to persist, no matter how many new electronic instruments are devised. Premature obituaries on the death of the sermon and the end of the book are themselves testimony to long-enduring habits of mind. In the very act of heralding the dawn of a new age with the advent of new media, contemporary analysts continue to bear witness, however inadvertently, to the ineluctable persistence of the past.

Subrahmanyan Chandrasekhar

1910–1995

Member, THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR *Editorial Board*

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Lessons in Navigation

HERBERT S. BAILEY, JR.

Lesson 1

The navigator deeply understands
the motions of the sun and moon and stars
and the spherical geometry of the earth.
Yet he calculates and plots by rote,
not thinking, just following rules,
so that, when the sea is rough,
he can find his position and course
and distance to a port
though he is wet and cold
and tired and seasick.

I am old and weary and sick.
It is never too late
to learn to navigate.

Lesson 2

The sun's foot is where
the line from the sun to the earth's center
penetrates the surface.
The sun's foot circumnavigates the earth each day.
That's nine hundred miles per hour,
or fifteen miles per minute,
or a quarter of a mile per second.
The navigator finds his position
by measuring his distance from the sun's foot,

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so he must know the exact time
in order to calculate where he is.

Some people just don't care.
Their chronometers are wrong.
They do not observe precisely.
They calculate carelessly.
They are a danger to themselves and others.

Lesson 3

When people are said to be "lost at sea,"
it means that they have drowned.
Although a navigator may be drowned
he is never "lost" at sea.
There is always some way to go,
some best direction in thickest fog or darkest night.

Never trust instinct, or think the compass wrong.
Instinct is always wrong in fog or night.
Near land, sail cautiously, and watch and listen,
or head away from shore.
The sun will rise or the sky will clear.
Be patient. Be patient.

✪ HERBERT S. BAILEY, JR., retired in 1986 after many years as Director of Princeton University Press.

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The Day Star Risen

DOUG TALLEY

When Bethany wakes at five in the morning,
she stands in her crib and sings in tongues
to give the birds their morning note.
Te Te, she cheers, Te Te Te Te,
an unrelenting pitch, Te Te Te Te,
to rouse a choir of willing voices
beneath the flowering April moon.
Some birds at length in turn pipe back
something a trifle like Te Te Te Te,
and others join as best they can
while shaking sleep from beak and feather.
A clamor builds and drowns the darkness,
the noise of a thousand, pulsing birds,
until the wind itself inhales the strain
and straightway blows it past the clouds
as reason enough for light to break
and make a russet morning air.
And to the dreaming ear there rises
from her note, as brilliant as the sun,
an angel's descant, Te Te Te Te,
Te nostra vox primum sonet.

O let our voice sing first to thee,
O first in all things thee, our God,
grateful to hear and see at last
the day star risen in our heart
at the angel sound of a child's phrase.
O let night prove the perfect morning
to brush off death and live forever,
while Bethany wakes the dozing sunrise
to join her song of perfect praise.

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Farewell to the Chief

MICHAEL STEPHENS

I WOKE EARLY, around six in the morning, took the van and drove over the causeway into Clearwater. I went up the steps of a church and into a back room where a bunch of people were having a meeting. I introduced myself by my first name, explained why I was there, and became one of them. The whole concept, so simple it was almost ridiculous, was also profound, and, if I say so myself, tailor-made for the Stephens family. On this morning, the day after his funeral, I did not believe my father had died of natural causes. (The members of my family have yet to determine what really kills us.) Rather, I saw my father's death as another manifestation of the disease that had killed my family on both sides and that had prompted my attendance at the meeting—alcoholism.

Technically speaking, my father died from heart failure. It was compounded by his dementia, which in turn was the result of many strokes, some small, some large, all of them clustered into the last couple of years of his life. I thought my brother Peter had hit it on the head the night before when he said that the old man had gone weird on us after his prostate operation a couple of years before. Peter went on to say that the Chief had lied to the anesthesiologist. When asked if he was a big drinker, he hedged and said that he was not.

I remembered one of those medical lectures we received when I was a patient at Smithers Alcoholism and Treatment Center in New York about how alcoholics react differently to ether because it's a chemical whose molecular structure bears a resemblance to alcohol's. Because alcoholics metabolize alcohol differently than non-alcoholics do—which finally is all that an alcoholic is, a person with an allergy to booze—they react differently to ether than non-alcoholics do. I remember the Irish nurse at Smithers telling us that, working in operating rooms, she knew when she had an alcoholic on her hands, be-

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cause he or she would wake up in the middle of an operation. Why? Because alcoholics need more anesthesia than non-alcoholics; they need enough to convince their bodies that the anesthesia is not ethyl alcohol, its friend and demon, its being and its all, their body's nemesis, its dark other.

So my father lied. He told the doctor that he was a moderate drinker, though even a casual look at the man would tell you that he was lying. He was a boozer from way back, probably from when he was a young boy in East New York, Brooklyn, a street kid and a wise guy trying to impress the adults and to prove to them that he was a big shot. Alcohol and big-shotism go hand in hand, and big shots are invariably bad patients because they do not cooperate, they are not willing to bend. They are rigid and they fight, as my father did all the way—from the deepening circles of the anesthesia's blur right up to the moment he bolted awake, screaming like a scared wild animal. So my father did not fare well during the operation, which was not for cancer—that would come later when he was deep into his dementia—but for a prostate problem. It was a minor operation with major results, because my father came out of it a different man—he suffered a serious stroke in the middle of the surgery. That was Peter's theory, at least, and it was a reasonable one, I thought. And it confirmed my thought that our family could not know what would kill us naturally. My grandfathers, my uncles, various aunts had died from boozing directly or indirectly, one way or the other.

That was another revelation I came upon in Clearwater. I never knew that my father had been sober himself for—depending upon who told you—anywhere from five to seven years, from around the time when he approached retirement as a boss at Kennedy Airport to that moment when he and my mother sold the house on Long Island and retired to Florida. Sometime, either before moving or after arriving in Clearwater, he went back to drinking, and, as anyone with a drinking problem will tell you, it never gets better once you go back to drinking; as is so often the case, it got a lot worse.

Oh, it was fine on the surface. My father had a good life down there: no children, no mortgages, no responsibilities, only horseshoes and snooker, shuffleboard and casual walks, dinner for two and movies, and long-distance calls to relatives back in New York who seemed to be a million miles away. When you don't drink for five years and then go back to it, the results are disastrous. Alcoholism is called a progressive disease because each time a drinker with this illness drinks, it gets worse and worse. Even if he hadn't had a drink for five years, once my father went back to the booze, it was as if he had been drinking all those years—his body craved the stuff even more. Slowly

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but surely, my father was killing himself, doing it by way of our family's poison of choice, something his father knew about, and his step-mother, his step-sister, and his half-sisters, all of whom had a similar jones, or addiction, for hooch.

If my mother, brothers, and I do not drink, we will find out what will kill us in the end. Who knows—maybe we will die earlier if we don't drink. But that is something I am willing to find out. In fact, I would prefer a shorter life to the hell that longtime drinkers descend into, dementia being but one of the places where alcohol takes them. I sat in this room in the back of a church in downtown Clearwater, the sun not quite up, and I listened to these people talking, and I was glad—relieved—to be among them.

After the meeting, I went back to the Blue Jay Motel to wake my brothers and prepare for our return to New York. We had had a long day, and I noticed that Tommy was getting more difficult. He had asked my mother if he could stay on in her apartment, but she wouldn't let him. She told him that if he managed to stay sober for six months, she'd have him down in the spring, but not before. Now he was unclear about whether the rehab he was in would let him back, because, though he had had a legitimate reason, he had left without permission. Over the past five days, the three of us—Brendan, Joe, and myself—had gotten into a locker-room kind of humor, and at the center of it was a mistake I had anticipated Tom would make. The couple who ran the motel reminded us of a Polish couple we knew named Pronsky. We all enjoyed it when Tom, predictably, called the motel employees by the Pronskys' name. Fortunately, his saying the wrong name was combined with the mountain of words that perpetually rolled off his tongue, so the couple didn't notice. Poor Tom.

Finally, all of us were ready to leave, and we waited outside by the white van wondering when Tom would be ready. Every couple of minutes he stuck his head out his window and gave us a status report on his packing. This struck me as peculiar because he had hardly anything with him but the clothes on his back. Still, he was too disorganized to get himself out of his room and into the van. We were to go back to our mother's to say good-bye, then to the airport, where we would return the van and hop on our plane for New York. Although it had disturbed me a few days earlier how physical everyone was with Tom—hitting him on the arm, slapping him on the head, not terribly hard but still enough for me to notice—I now found myself thinking violent thoughts about him. What was his problem? Why didn't he get ready and down to the van? I had woken him more than two hours before. But it was no use trying to

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reason with him. Tom had a problem, a deep-seated one, a real disorder, so it was better not to explode, which only would make him more nervous.

When he did come outside, chatting away to the "Pronskys," he seemed indifferent to the fact that we had been waiting by the van for more than half an hour. Brendan gave him a noogie on the head. Joe shoved him into the van. Right away he took up his endless monologue about nothing and everything, the moon and stars, dogs on the prowl, birds in the bayou, the price of a new guitar—all of it disjointed, virtually non-stop non sequiturs. We decided to eat breakfast at an upscale diner at the entrance to the beach, a diner with ersatz fifties decor, including murals of *The Honeymooners, I Love Lucy* characters, *Your Show of Shows,* Jack Benny, and Milton Berle. After ordering food for a small army, Tom immediately hit on the waitresses, telling them about himself, his brothers, his family, his father's funeral—anything and everything that came into his mind and out of his mouth simultaneously. And then Brendan and Tom were at each other, because Tom felt that his baby brother didn't respect him enough.

"Why should I respect you?" Brendan asked.

"Because I'm your older brother," Tom said, his logic flawless.

"You're a bum," answered Brendan, matter-of-factly.

"Now you sound like the Chief."

"Hey, get a job, quit mooching off me."

"Speaking of which," Tom said, "I need you to cover me for breakfast, loan me a few bucks for cigarettes and also a little extra to hold me over when I get back to the rehab on the Island."

"What Brendan's saying, Tom," Joe interrupted, "is that you can't keep expecting him to bail you out all the time."

"Hey, quit ganging up on me, all right?" Tom demanded, getting defensive.

His defensiveness reminded me, in an exaggerated way, of my own way of dealing with adversity. I made a note of it. I think my defensiveness cost me my last three or four jobs. It is probably why I have been unemployed for much of the past two years and why I am verging on being unemployable. All my family's problems were the very same problems that plagued me. I had a short temper like Brendan said he had at work. I became defensive, got into my fight-or-flight mode, as my wife called it, when challenged or criticized. In fact, I couldn't take criticism, and it made me wonder how I endured—or was endured—in two graduate programs, one for writing, the other for drama. Like Joe, I was an isolator; I wanted most to crawl into my domestic cocoon and say good-bye to the rest of the world, making a

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separate peace and going my merry way. Like my brother Jimmy, there were times when I became manic and other times when I was depressed for months on end. Like my brother Peter, toothless and riddled with insult and injury, I catalogued the long list of my resentments and vowed to get revenge on everyone who ignored or persecuted me.

Like my mother and sisters, I thought that I could finesse my way through everything, that a little charm, a little upbeat spin, a trace of a smile, would solve everything, but it would not. Like my father, I was a rager, a railer, a fist-shaker, a man who dug in his heels when threatened, a little bullterrier—the kind that lock their jaws onto someone or something and never let go—a man full of invective, spleen, gall, bile, sputum, mucous, and treacly sentimentality that I foisted off as honest and sincere feeling.

What I mean to say is that I was no different from any of these members of my family, least of all poor Tommy, that hopeless, homeless vagrant, that endless talker and explainer and defender, that edgy, uncomfortable, ill-at-ease presence at the end of the table, who spilled his coffee twice, tipped over Joe's orange juice, knocked over Brendan's water, and lectured me that I cursed too much, that I took the name of the Lord in vain, that I was an idolater, a heathen and nonbeliever.

"Screw you and eat your cinnamon pancakes, Tommy," I said. Even if we were alike, I still didn't have to listen to his grief. "Screw you and shut up."

"You'd think because Mike was a writer that he could talk better than a truck driver," Tom said.

"You got a problem with truck drivers?" Brendan, a truck driver himself, asked.

"No, no, no," Tom said nervously, "I'm just saying . . ."

"What are you saying?" Joe asked.

"Hey!" Tom shouted. "Look! Above you! It's Jackie Gleason!"

Then he was off on another one of his monologues that went nowhere. He talked about Jackie Gleason, bowling, running shoes, the Beatles; he asked another dumb question about my writing, another dumb question about Joe's new house; he criticized Brendan's attitude and commented on the waitresses' legs. All this was delivered in one breathless sentence—without pause or facile rhythm—that rushed out of him like foul air. Poor Tom.

On the drive into Clearwater, we blasted the stereo system in the van, rocking and rolling our father into eternity. Once again Tom took umbrage; he didn't like the way the three of us behaved in the immediate aftermath of our father's end. He was right, of course, but

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only if we were people other than the people we were. Even in traditional Irish funerals it is considered proper to misbehave after the funeral. That is what a wake is for, to act out and carry on, and since none of us drank anymore, at least we could carry on in the van, telling Michael Jackson jokes.

"That's enough," Tom shouted, "I've heard enough of this!"

"Shut up," Joe said matter-of-factly, even kindly, and he kept driving.

At my mother's, Peter and his children were awake but still eating breakfast. When I was a child, I remembered that, though my mother was not a housekeeper of any rank—our house was filthy and disorganized—she made meals for people all day long. Now she was back to her old routines, and I couldn't tell whether she liked it or not. It had been so many years since this many people wanting to be fed and sheltered had been in her house.

Peter's children were the oldest of the grandchildren, in some respects they were my mother's favorites. When someone told Peter's son Brendan that he looked a little bit like Tom Cruise—and he did—my mother added: "Oh, Brendan's handsomer than Tom Cruise." Once my mother had said that Tom Cruise looked like me, too, I recalled, and then I realized that Tom Cruise was probably her favorite actor because he looked, at certain angles and moments, like everyone in the family, including my mother herself, Mrs. Cruise.

Tom—my brother, not the actor—had left the three brothers he had been running with for the past five days and lingered around his nieces and nephews and his own sister Rosemary, who was there with her two large, sleek greyhounds.

Coffee was brewed. Coffee cake was eaten. Cigarettes were smoked. But mostly pot after pot of coffee was drunk. Nowadays the coffeepot had replaced the beer bottle, and coffee was ubiquitous. Everyone drank coffee, and after one pot was made, another was quickly started. The room smelled of coffee and cigarettes, coffee cake and people.

Better to leave Florida without resentment, mourning my father but thankful that he didn't have to suffer any longer with his dementia and the terrors of that ailment. At least he could find some peace in the eternal moment, whatever it was and wherever he might be, whatever form he might manifest himself into—spirit or simply new molecules, wave action in the sea, a worm in the ground, a ray of sunlight from the sky, a dog on a leash, a million-year-old rock, a bicycle, a lollipop, an auto part, a strand of wild-assed DNA, a whisper across the wind. We had come to my mother's place to say good-bye

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to her and the other members of the family. Joe collected our father's suits, Tommy annoyed other family members, Brendan talked with his nieces and nephews, and I called New York to say I'd be there later in the day.

My mother sat at the dining-room table talking with her grandchildren from North Carolina and Texas, and it suddenly occurred to me that it was she, not my father, who was the real talker in the family. Maybe I don't mean talker, because it was hard to top my father for sheer talk. My mother—although I didn't realize it until recently—is the storyteller in the family. Years ago, I would have said my father or oldest brother or my Irish grandmother was the storyteller. The style of speaking that my mother employed was so low-key and self-effacing that it was hard to realize how artful some of her tales were. These other relatives, I realized, were talkers, not storytellers, purveyors of news, not legends. Everything my mother said was a set piece. She had been telling us stories since we were children, and each retelling was simply a variation on the theme.

What also obscured her storytelling gift was that no one associated words with my mother. Instead, they thought of babies. That's because she had sixteen children, nine of whom lived. I was the third of those children, and I spent my childhood seeing her perpetually swollen belly and her seasonal trips to St. Mary's hospital in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn, where all her children were born. All, that is, but me. I was born in a naval hospital in Washington, D.C., right after the war. But that's another story. This one is about my mother, the Henry Ford of maternity, the cloning machine, a human Galápagos turtle who, no matter where she was on Long Island, had to come back to the ancestral soil to give birth. Brooklyn was an ontological place, good for birthing and burying.

Every story my mother ever told was set in Brooklyn—not a borough in turmoil, but an idyllic place. There were no ghettos or crime; this was a gaslit world of brownstones, trolleys, horse-drawn carts, iceboxes, coal cellars; most important, it was a world fueled by social and moral order. My mother never spoke of neighborhoods in these sagas, but of parishes—Our Lady of Lourdes, St. John's, and St. Gregory's. Everyone was Irish—or at least Catholic—in my mother's Brooklyn, but, unlike the potato-picking bog men of my father's immigrant clan, these were old-time New Yorkers, who may once have lived in Albany and Manhattan, but had married into families from the easternmost borough of Brooklyn so long ago that their previous lives outside the territory were only hearsay. Her relatives were merchants and newspapermen, lawyers and builders.

By contrast, we, her children, grew up ghettoized, either in East

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New York or in the working-class suburbs of Long Island. In a crowded little house filled with nine children, not to mention an occasional grandparent or a miscreant uncle sleeping off a drunk on the couch, her stories were told in the dining room over table wine and Salem cigarettes, and, thinking about her now, she appeared as exotic then as Scheherazade, and Brooklyn was the setting of her Arabian nights.

My mother's Brooklyn does not exist anymore, and it may never have existed except in her mind. Yet I have gone to Bedford-Stuyvesant and seen the house where she was born and grew up. In its heyday, it had twenty-six rooms, and several generations of her family had been born in it. Later it would become a convent, then a rooming house. Today it no longer exists, except as a vivid shelter in my mother's imagination, and in her stories.

The best stories concern losing the house. Her father was a bail bondsman and haberdasher. He had been mugged outside the Tombs and afterward lost his memory. This was followed by the Depression. In the thirties, when my mother was a teenager, the family lived in a succession of rundown tenements and ended up in a small apartment in Crown Heights. Misfortune, as she tells it, became her strength; adversity only made her more grateful.

Besides, she adored her family, especially her father, who was a sweet, daft old man, good-looking and extremely well dressed, a figure out of another time. He epitomized that gaslit world of her imagination and may have been its inspiration. Not long before, she had told me a story about her father that was not from the grand house days. It was the story of their struggles through Brooklyn and that long march of downward mobility throughout the Depression. As my mother approached her seventy-ninth birthday, her stories were no longer so idealized. They had become grittier with time and with our own circumstances.

Her father had purchased his usual supply of bootleg gin. A son transported the large bottle home. At the steps—called the stoop in Brooklyn—the son (my dear Uncle Jimmy) lost his purchase on the bottle of gin, and it slipped out of his hands and broke. That swell old idyllic father in pinstriped suit, high-starched collar, bow tie, and waxed mustache, promptly proceeded to beat his son unconditionally.

When I heard this, I was not so much shocked as relieved. At last her stories resembled a world I was familiar with, a world of drinking, domestic violence, and passions out of control. The backdrop was not the scrim for a musical about New York but the real thing itself. I saw tenements, stoops, and rugged streets. This was Brooklyn as I remem-

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bered it and as I would probably convey it to my own grandchildren some day. It was a Brooklyn of enormous feelings, some of them disproportionate and unreal.

All this reminded me of something that Isaac Bashevis Singer said: if feelings were money, we'd all be millionaires. When Brooklyn is mentioned, I think of my own childhood, certainly, but also the hundreds of relatives I knew from there, and then the ghosts of thousands of ancestors. I also think of the downward mobility shown in my mother's tales, how her gentrified family slipped from their houses into tenements and then disappeared for good. Yet, somehow, remembering this does not necessarily bring bad feelings.

No fallen southern aristocrat has anything on my mother. My mother's Brooklyn is not a world of facts, but one of imaginative possibility, a voicing—a register of joy and sorrow—that forever plays in my own head like a favorite tune. All this was gone now that my father had died, my mother had become a widow, and most of my family lived in Florida.

I was about to return to New York, the city, my own family, my own uncertainties. I kissed my mother and other relatives good-bye, hopped into the van, and headed toward the airport. Leaving was anti-climactic, almost routine, and without event. Because we had badgered Tom so much about being late, he managed to come out of the house, and we left more or less on time.

Once again, on the drive to the airport, Tom couldn't stop talking, so I offered him—a homeless, broke person—twenty dollars if he would not speak for half an hour. Within five minutes, he turned around and said, "Can I say something?"

"You spoke!"

"Just one thing and I'll be quiet."

"But that was not the deal."

Then he went off into his stream of consciousness, rattling on about nothing and everything, his monologue, without a core, just a din of words, pouring out of him nervously and without relief. I realized that he didn't have much choice in the matter, that he couldn't stop talking even if he wanted to.

Within fifteen minutes, Tom and Brendan began arguing again, this time because Tom had said something negative about Brendan, even though Brendan, time and again, had helped Tom out of scrapes and predicaments and had provided food and shelter for him when everyone else, including his parents and other siblings and friends, had abandoned him.

Joe dropped Tom and Brendan at the airport, but as soon as Tom saw that Joe and I were going somewhere else, he balked and wanted

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to jump back into the van. He was terrified about being left alone at the airport. We explained to him that it was only for a few minutes; we had to return the van and would come back to this very spot. And we did. The return took no longer than fifteen minutes, and yet when we got back to the airport, Tom was pacing, stumbling, mumbling, chattering under his breath, looking grim and humorless, dark and battered.

It seems that there was a problem. Our flight was stuck in Fort Myers with brake failure. The airline didn't know when the flight would arrive, but they would check us in. We went upstairs for coffee and juice, and Tom went back to antagonizing Brendan. He also began antagonizing Joe, the only brother so far who hadn't yet laid into him. He now did, telling Tom to shut the hell up and listen, to sit on his hands, button his lip, take the cotton out of his ears.

I can't capture, I realize, just what it was that Tom did to annoy everyone. As I write this down, it almost seems like a subjective reading of his behavior, and yet it wasn't just the family who felt this way. Nearly everyone who came into contact with him eventually had this reaction. Partly it was his barrage of questions—not one, not even one at a time, but one after the other after the other after the other, nonstop and without end.

"How is your wife?" he asks. "And your daughter? And your apartment? Is it okay? How is your block? Why do they have those funny lights on your block? What's that stuff called on the ground? Oh, yeah, concrete. You like the new Dodges? I'm looking for a new guitar. You think I could make it as a singer if I tried? What time is it? Who has a cigarette? Did you guys like the eggs this morning? Did you like the juice we just had? Hey, is this coffee any good? It tastes funny. Did you see those shoes that Mommy was wearing? How come the wheels on the van weren't white? The van was white? How come? How come you had to return the van so far away? Where is that place? Is that Tampa or Saint Pete? Is it Daylight Savings Time down here? I guess that doesn't count anymore. Is it afternoon already? Hey, what month is this? Is this Thursday? [It was Wednesday.] I wonder if they're going to throw me out of the rehab I'm staying at because I've been gone almost a week? Did I tell you about the rules there? It's tough. Is that in Freeport or Hempstead? I can't remember. Roosevelt? That's right. It's Roosevelt. That's usually a black town, but in this case, the rehab has black and white people, no Asians, no Puerto Ricans. No, no, no. One Puerto Rican, one Dominican guy. Hey, Mike, do people think that your daughter is Asian or American? Do people mistake your daughter for being American? [I tell him that she is American.] How could she be American? Her mother is Ko-

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rean. [I tell him that she's American because she was born in New York City.] Oh, yeah, she was born in New York. That's right. So I guess that makes her American. But people must think that she's Asian, right? They think she's Asian, even though she's American? Am I right, Mike?"

On and on Tom went, asking and asking, but, strangely, never listening, never seeming to want a response to his endless questions.

Our flight never arrived from Fort Myers. Finally the airline suggested putting some of us on other carriers. But, for whatever reason, Joe and Tom stayed behind with Brendan, who was unable to switch flights because he was traveling as an airline employee. This was not as easily accomplished, either my exit or their staying behind, as might be imagined. The attendant had us wait in line for more than two hours, filling out each person's new flight slip by hand, tracing and retracing the numbers, reading it over again. When I finally got up to him two hours later—and there had only been two people in front of me—I got a whiff of his breath; I guess he was drunk.

Somehow he managed to fill out my papers in time for me to leave United and get over to USAir. Just before I left, I heard Joe explode on the line. Now it was his turn to act out; he shouted and fumed at the slow, drunken attendant. I waved good-bye from the escalator, ascended, got back on the monorail for the other side of the terminal, and was gone.

Gradually, after reserving a seat on the USAir flight and then getting a bit of lunch, I let the voices of my family slide off me. Those voices were heavy with guilt and shame and our childhoods; once I shed them, it was like taking off an enormous coat of mail, like shedding a raccoon coat in the beginning of spring. I bit into a Delicious apple, sipped tepid coffee, ate a tasteless bagel, and reveled in the solitude of the crowded terminal. But then, almost like an echo, perhaps more like an afterthought, I heard that familiar voice again: it was Tommy. At first I imagined that it was a kind of auditory hallucination, part of the stress of grieving for my father, yet it sounded too real, too near, too obviously a part of the terminal. When I looked up, there they were, not all of them, but Joe and Tom, who had also managed to get on the flight.

After I boarded the flight, the time ticked off, and I didn't see either Joe or Tom board. Maybe Tom had freaked getting on the plane. Maybe he had gone off the deep end in the terminal. Finally Joe boarded, looking weary and beat, Tom behind him dragging his bags. It turned out that Tom had gotten misplaced once again. He had gone off to the men's room and not come back. He probably had gotten into a conversation with a stranger, lin-

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gered, and then couldn't remember where Joe or I was.

Tom had the seat next to me, and the flight, unlike the one down, was crowded. He was tense, so I suggested reading. Then I thought I might try a test. I asked him to read a poem by William Carlos Williams, that simple, short one about the plums in the icebox. I thought that perhaps he would have trouble reading the poem. Immediately he sensed a trap.

"I can read all right," he said.

"Just read it," I told him.

He did. The reading was without hesitation, direct and even intelligent. So I was wrong about that part of his problem. Maybe, like all of us, he only needed to give his brain and body a rest from the booze. That might be all the confusion he had, though I suspected something more profound, more deeply rooted and sinister. He did promise to be open to taking medication—I thought he might need it—and he was open to one of us finding him some kind of long-term therapeutic arrangement, where he might work on rudimentary social skills. But he wouldn't promise anything more than that. He didn't even say that he would stop drinking, and I suspected that he might have a pop as soon as he had the first opportunity, maybe in a few weeks when he got out of this particular rehab.

When we landed at LaGuardia instead of Kennedy, it was late in the evening, and I told my brothers, since I had only the bag on my shoulder, that I was going to head on. My home in uptown Manhattan was only about fifteen to twenty minutes away at this time of night, so I'd just slip out of the airport and finally get that quiet I had missed for five days. Joe and Tom would take an airport car out to Long Island, no doubt at Joe's expense. I said good-bye and left them in the terminal, Tom's interminable voice receding into the aluminum and glass, the airport rugs, and the footfalls of other passengers.

As the taxi went over the Triboro Bridge, I caught sight of the Manhattan skyline on the left, and I smelled the exhaust fumes through the open window. I was back home. In fact, it was this city, I thought, that was the common thread I had with my father, and maybe nothing else. Unlike the others in the family, he and I were New Yorkers. I imagined that he would still be alive if, instead of moving to Florida, he and my mother had only vacationed in Florida for a few weeks a year. He'd still be alive, I thought, and probably still have his brains, because he would have walked more, putting off the strokes for another day. He would have been an older person among familiar things—the Statue of Liberty, the Empire State Building, the bridges and tunnels, the Yellow cabs, subways, mass-transit buses, Shea and Yankee stadiums, even Coney Island and the Rockaways,

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Brooklyn Heights and Carroll Gardens, the waterfront, the docks, the piers. More important, he would have had other people who shared his outlook on life in that special way that New Yorkers have—attitude and grace, meanness and hidden kindness, crime and compassion. When he wanted to reminisce, people wouldn't have wondered what he was talking about. He would have been part of a community, and that was one of the most important parts of his identity: being a New Yorker.

Instead, my father died brainless, incompetent, incontinent, isolated and alone amid palms and alligators, geckos and floral shirts. He died in a place that was as familiar to his primitive Brooklyn mind as a foreign planet. He was gone.

I wondered why we all, my brothers and sisters and I, were born. What purpose did I have? What was my mission in life? Why was I this man's son? Was I just like him or did I have a bit of my own humanity, something different about me that made me unique? True, I was many people, many things to other people: a father and a lover, a husband and a writer. But I was also this man's son, one of his prodigal sons come home for his funeral. Now it was over, and, unlike the biblical story in which the son stays home, I had left once again. I had come back to my own world to be a part of the flow, if not of the commerce, then of the intellectual property, the imaginative landscape of the city.

I had returned to the world of my own obsessions and was no longer protected by that earlier generation. Now nothing separated me from eternity: I was on the front lines; I was out of the trenches and marching toward the tree line. This was it. I no longer hated my father; I even felt a tinge of sorrow as I re-entered our city. More important, my family, which had been atomized when I was a child, was back. I had a kid brother, a mother, sisters, other brothers and their children, a long continuity—all of us fighting uphill against our addictions, bad attitudes, grandiosity, childishness, and empty lives. I thought about getting back into the rhythm of my life. So long, Chief.

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Beautiful Numbers

JOHN R. SWALLOW

Discovering a vocation is never easy. And even when you hear the call and devote several years to the task, there may still remain the lingering feeling that you are working to roll your stone up the wrong hill. You ask the wrong questions and interpret the answers mistakenly in a larger context. What is lacking is none other than an aesthetic sense, a sense with which to sort out the dissonance of competing modes of thought and lines of argument. Only by joining imagination to this sense are you able to find your voice, to compose an adequate reply to your calling. I began to find my aesthetic sense in graduate school some years ago—and now I am a practicing mathematician.

It may strike some as odd to describe a sense of beauty in mathematics, given its structure as a vast tower of logical implications. Mathematics is popularly cited as the ultimate refuge of cold, unforgiving rationality, with mathematicians cast as the priests and priestesses of this religion devoid of feeling. Yet while the stuff of mathematics is innately rational, from logical proofs to technical computations, the process is nonetheless profoundly imaginative, with intellect and emotion intertwined. Of course, mathematicians share in the excitement and depression of accomplishment and failure, but in contemplating solely the truths of mathematics, there can be felt the pangs of a deeper, a subtler sense.

To trace my journey toward a sense of mathematical beauty is to follow a path marked by the milestones of my exchanges with students and professors in graduate school. My assimilation into a culture of mathematics began when I joined a graduate class of mostly international students who were seemingly much more committed to mathematics than I. Our entering class numbered seven, five of whom were from other countries—Lebanon, Poland, Brazil, Canada, and Singapore—countries that did not boast of having graduate programs in mathematics as strong as some in the United States. Of fellow American students, however, I found only one. At the very outset, the presence of this diverse group let me know in no uncertain terms that mathematics was an international language spoken by good minds from many countries, and my amazement at this fact forced me to reevaluate my sense of the mathematical enterprise.

This collection of fellow students should not have surprised me in its variety, for as an undergraduate I had availed myself of an opportunity that should have prepared me for such an event—a mathematical history course. One goal of such a course certainly ought to be to expose its students to a cultural history of mathematics, to its many-pronged, international progress, and to the distinguishing properties of those questions that enthralled mathematicians in previous generations. I remained unmoved, however, deceiving myself that mathematics, at least in the modern era, primarily consisted of American academics. I possessed no sense of the vastness of mathematical culture—of why so many are captivated by mathematics and its beauty. No course can fully prepare a student for immersion in a foreign culture, and my immersion marked the first step on my path to seeing beauty inside mathematics.

I was brought up short by these international students, and in my first few months with them, I perceived two clearly defined characteristics of our class. The first was the impressive mathematical preparation of the majority:

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every foreign-educated student had completed a master's degree by either taking courses or doing research; we Americans stood out with only our bachelor's degrees. I surmised that my undergraduate preparation, strong yet without the depth of graduate-level courses, might be little competition for such strength and experience, and I wondered about my admission. One professor stated the fact baldly: "We admit as many well-qualified foreigners as we can, and we fill the rest of the class with Americans." Another characteristic of our class was that many of us shared a susceptibility to the sirens of other endeavors, ones in which we might find beauty more easily than in the rapid pace and rational nature of our studies. One classmate had come to mathematics relatively late in his life, having studied the cello in Paris at sixteen. Another had studied mathematics, quit to try his hand at professional chess playing, then attempted a career in film directing, and finally returned to the fold. Still another classmate had an intense interest in French literature and philosophy (as well as Cuban cigars). After failing to muster the single-mindedness to pass his mathematics exams, he transferred to another university and, word has it, there completed his doctorate in French literature.

I had not anticipated such breadth in our class, whose members had been selected out of hundreds who applied to the program. I concluded, however, that it is not uncommon for those who pursue graduate mathematics to have deep interests in other fields, including the humanities and the arts. I found myself at once comforted and challenged by this state of affairs: on the one hand, I was relieved to find compatriots who shared my interest in literature and music, while on the other, I wondered if, in their broader and longer experience, they had already discovered what was beautiful in mathematics, and, if so, by what means they had seen mathematics so clearly.

I realized that in many ways mathematics is more like the humanities and the arts than like the sciences. To be sure, mathematicians do experiment by trying hypotheses out on various data sets, whether they be hard numbers or examples of abstract concepts constructed with difficult techniques. But the progress of mathematics, the determination of new directions and objects for further study, is closer to the humanities and the arts, for these disciplines all share a relation to physical reality that is only tangential and imagined; they are realms not physical but human, not scientific but perceived through another sense. Physicists study the structures and forces that drive the physical world; chemists study the substances that make it up; biologists study the relationship of these substances to organisms. Mathematical reality, however, allows no simple description. Like the realities of the humanities and the arts, mathematical reality is perceived by some as Platonic and ideal, by others as a mere construct, a purely personal response to an individual imagination. Whether deconstructed or not, these realities require incisive intuitions, not large labs of measurement, to probe beneath the outward coincidences. To the extent that mathematics possesses its own distinct reality, it is only by learning the lay of this land that one is led to an appreciation for the beauty in it.

My colleagues had already traveled in mathematical reality and had derived from it some sense of mathematical beauty; having not done so when I entered graduate school, I doubt that I could have formulated a mathematical aesthetic any earlier. When I entered, I was what may be best described as fond of mathematics. I knew only that, as a child in school in the South and as an adolescent at a small undergraduate college in Tennessee, I stood out as an advanced mathematics student. I grasped concepts easily, saw solutions more rapidly than others, and enjoyed working relatively straightforward textbook problems. I had little desire to create or discover my own mathematics. Perhaps because of this disinclination to ask my own questions, my efforts to discern or appreciate beauty amidst the content of the courses failed. With my collegiate contemporaries, mathematics majors, and most especially with my future wife, I did attempt to find what we termed a "big picture" in mathematics, some all-encompassing framework into which what we had learned might be placed in a proper context. Order and structure do not, however, comprise an aesthetic, and, although we found interrelationships between and among courses and were able to compare techniques and approaches, anything more than entirely superficial beauty remained hidden. Without an impetus to provide an artistic context for my mathematical

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studies, I felt only a simple satisfaction in a comprehension of difficult facts.

The pursuit of beauty did not drive me to graduate school, for I had at best only an inkling of it in mathematics; no, what drove me to graduate school was exactly that which drives most mathematics students to further study: the simple fact of having been labeled "advanced," with the accompanying pleasure in learning successively more general theorems and applying them to closely related problems. The irony strikes deeper in that I could hardly have found myself in a position less conducive to enjoying the beauty in the subject I would devote years to studying, feeling as disadvantaged and pressed for time as I did at the start of my graduate school career. Had I not finally created an aesthetic perspective on my work, I would certainly now regret the decision I made at that juncture, which was not to pursue those studies in which I had already developed an aesthetic sense. I might then have chosen graduate school in literature; through the lens of the New (and now old) Criticism, I had discovered an appreciation for the short story. I might have pursued graduate school in music theory, having nurtured my enjoyment of Baroque music to a full-fledged appreciation of classical composition. In both music and literature, I perceived beauty through a study of minutia, and, to be fair, perhaps I suspected that I might one day find beauty by studying the minutia of mathematics. But such was not my primary motivation; I simply followed my talents and abilities to the accolades of parents, friends, and professors, ultimately enrolling in a selective graduate program in the East.

The implicit comparison between my experience and that of my classmates caused me to wonder if, as a element of our educational system, the surveying of this mathematical reality comes comparatively late for Americans. As children we learn to read, to see and draw, and to compute; however, we learn about natures that are non-mathematical long before we fully perceive mathematical reality. The teaching of the humanities in high schools and colleges encourages comment on our human nature by drawing upon the wealth of experience that we have gained from emotional and personal relations and by using as touchstones imaginative poetry and prose. The student of reason, of rationality, of mathematics can similarly respond to mathematical experience but, before doing so, must begin a program of collecting experience in the objects of mathematical reality, be they functions, variables, surfaces, or integers. In college we survey literary reality enough to read and write critically, but we may be still too inexperienced to comprehend the vocabulary of primes, curves, and the calculus. Only after we see enough examples of any given abstraction to understand what property the abstraction truly describes and only after we attain a degree of familiarity comparable to that of operating an automobile are the terms and techniques used to describe and probe the abstractions revealed as appropriate, perhaps complicated, but certainly relevant attempts to answer natural questions about them.

In meeting other students who were mathematically inclined, my eyes were opened to the nature of mathematics; in working closely with these fellow students, I found myself taking the next step toward an aesthetic: searching for canonical roads in mathematical reality. I wondered whether some methods were better than others to gain an understanding of a given mathematical statement, whether there was a right way to comprehend mathematics. The discovery of such a way would be a boon indeed for a comprehension of the subject. My first year of graduate school, spent largely working toward the qualifying exams, provided the motivation for these musings. I studied weekly, and at times daily, with the Canadian and Brazilian students, who had seen much of the material before. I remember my frequent annoyance with their solutions to certain preparatory problems, because I felt that the solutions were "unnatural" or contrived—clever "tricks" that gave the solution but taught very little about the surrounding mathematics. I am sure that some of the solutions were in fact tricks, but I suspect that many of my complaints were due simply to inexperience. The recognition of the myriad ways to approach concepts, depending on one's genius, was at first disappointing—a student of mathematics always hopes for a simple solution to a problem—but it truly provided my first opportunity to see beauty in mathematics. Witnessing a new, unanticipated connection between two concepts elicits first intellectual amazement, followed by critical assessment, and then, in many cases, by aes-

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thetic appreciation. My fellow students had prepared me for and led me, if only by small steps, toward structuring my discipline around an aesthetic sense, an artistic preference.

While I realized that there is no right way to understand a theorem, I did come to believe that there are "natural," frequently naive questions about mathematical concepts. I saw that perceiving these questions requires only simple curiosity, coupled with an easy familiarity with the mathematical objects at hand. It had not appeared so to me before, for research questions had seemed to me abstract and esoteric. I had shared, in some measure, my own students' amazement that there might be any new, comprehensible mathematical questions, even though in class they themselves asked natural questions that were new some time ago. Mathematicians do spend their lives searching for answers to entirely natural questions, however, and their work is judged, as it should be, on its contribution to the solution of these natural questions. A mathematical result without a larger context or program in which to place it, a context in which it advances our knowledge toward the solution of simply stated problems, somehow misses the point. Far better to adopt a point of view and have the theorems follow as validation of the perspective; in this way, concepts are highlighted, far-reaching techniques of proof illuminated, and analogies discerned.

As an example of an abstraction studied by but still unfamiliar to many, consider the imaginary number. An imaginary number—the nemesis of many a high school student—is comprised of a real number multiplied by i, which we define as the square root of -1. These numbers are now as familiar to me as Emma Woodhouse is to an avid Jane Austen reader. This familiarity comes about from thinking about similar numbers and constructs, just as one might approach Emma Woodhouse through a consideration of female protagonists in the nineteenth-century novel. Students constantly question the necessity of introducing the abstraction of imaginary numbers, discouraged perhaps by the name. I contend, however, that imaginary numbers are as real and as imaginary as Emma Woodhouse and that imaginary numbers aid in our understanding of the "irrational" numbers, like the square root of 2, as much as Emma delights us in her struggles with maturity and society. Just as Emma serves to provide fodder for our questions about women, femininity, and English society, imaginary numbers lead us to consider their generalizations—roots of arbitrary polynomials—and to question the notion of measurement of geometric objects that have line segments of integer lengths.

What natural questions arise when one is presented with imaginary numbers? One begins by noticing a property that they possess—realizing, say, that they are the solutions to certain polynomial equations. For instance, i and $-i$ are solutions to $x^2 + 1 = 0$. One asks if any polynomial equation we write down, say $x^3 - x^2 + x - 1 = 0$, has imaginary solutions. One wonders why, when we have imaginary solutions to a polynomial equation, these solutions always occur in pairs—a naive observation generating a naive question. One considers numbers that are the sum of a real number and an imaginary number, such as $1 + i$, calling them, for lack of a better term, "complex numbers," and one asks if any such number is, in turn, a solution to some polynomial equation. Following another route, one thinks of the prime factors of any integer ($6 = 2 \cdot 3$ and $25 = 5 \cdot 5$, for instance) and inquires whether complex numbers might have prime factors—even though we are unsure what an "integer" complex number might be. One wonders what makes i particularly special, whether similar situations arise if one lets imaginary numbers be real numbers multiplied not by i but by a number j, which we define to be the square root of -3, or 17, or 25. Almost every result in this area of mathematics—algebra and number theory—is an answer to a simple, natural question asked as a result of a relatively naive curiosity and an active familiarity with the mathematical objects in question.

Even armed with my discoveries about mathematical comprehension and natural questions, I still lacked a fully formed aesthetic sense, and I was caught unprepared for my next hurdle, one that ideally would be overcome by such a sense: the determination of a dissertation problem. I had passed the mandatory exams in analysis, algebra, and topology by the end of the first year and was free to torment myself with the tasks of choosing a thesis topic and selecting an adviser. We lacked a seminar in which professors might

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discuss their work. Reading their papers—the obvious method for learning of the professors' areas of expertise—resulted all too often in discouragement, for their methods seemed very clever and the definitions completely unmotivated. (Anyone who has been lost after listening to the first three minutes of a lecture, mathematical or otherwise, has faced the daily reality of a mathematics graduate student reading papers and attending colloquia.) I was forced to choose a direction while too unfamiliar with the geography to decide how high a given mountain might reach, and without any foreknowledge of whether the other side might be verdant or desolate.

Many of my colleagues had an easier time choosing a topic, having pursued research in their home countries or having seen enough mathematics to have developed preferences. I reflected on the material covered for the three exams and recognized that, while I scored well on the topology exam, I was fearful of my inability to visualize certain objects. A doughnut I could maneuver in my mind to become a coffee cup, but procedures in which two sides of an object were sewn together, producing an object with only one side, gave me pause. On the exam in analysis, an area of mathematics that envelops the calculus and has a definite application to physical reality, I similarly scored well, but the sheer vastness of the many results I had assimilated worried me. I lacked a thread with which I might tie together what seemed only a loose, disparate collection of results. The exam in algebra, fortunately, lit a fire in my heart: I performed quite poorly on it, barely passing, and was therefore intensely interested in this subject, which I had previously considered trivial.

My experience in choosing a topic for study illuminates a fundamental divergence in the study of mathematics from the study of the humanities and the arts. To be sure, I encountered difficulty choosing a topic because I had not sufficiently surveyed mathematical reality, but I also believe that the comparative inaccessibility of mathematics hindered me. Literature and history courses are organized in a "top-down" fashion, meaning that students in those fields consider major literary works and historical events; as they become more proficient, they are asked to comment on more analytic, philosophical, and artistic themes. On the other hand, students find mathematics to be inherently "bottom-up," for they rarely gain a glimpse of the larger structures and motivating questions, and instead follow a long, logical progression of results and proofs.

Taking the mandatory algebra exam marked the first time in my mathematical career that I was impressed with the power and sophistication of mathematics. I appreciated the subject not because the questions were concerned with esoteric, avant-garde results. On the contrary, I grasped how natural the questions were and felt intuitively that the "obvious" answers must be correct; but I could not find proofs for those answers. In fact, the question on which I embarrassed myself the most egregiously, a question in the area of what is called Galois theory, fascinated me the most and eventually became my dissertation topic.

The theory is named for Evariste Galois, a French mathematician who died at the age of twenty in a duel. Galois left an extraordinary letter behind for posterity, the content of which lies behind much of modern number theory, including the recent proof of Fermat's Last Theorem. "This letter, if judged by the novelty and profundity of ideas it contains, is perhaps the most substantial piece of writing in the whole literature of mankind," wrote Hermann Weyl in his survey of symmetry in mathematics. Galois theory is the study of certain permutations of the roots of polynomials, primarily motivated by one particular, naive question. Every junior high school student learns the quadratic formula, by which the solutions to the quadratic equation $ax^2 + bx + c = 0$ can be written in terms of a, b, and c; does a similar formula exist for polynomials of higher degree, such as $ax^4 + bx^3 + cx^2 + dx + e = 0$? Using Galois theory, one can show that no similar, general formula exists if the degree of the polynomial is greater than four.

Beginning work on a dissertation requires, as has oft been said, standing on the shoulders of giants. Lacking the genius to command all of mathematics at once, one must rely on a tower of results rendered acceptable by virtue of their surviving for years the criticism of brilliant mathematicians. As might be expected, I harbored reservations about assuming the truth of so much work gone before. I found myself unable to appreciate mathematics without a personal belief and confidence in its truth, or at least in the truth of the section of mathematics in which I worked; I required no

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less than a sort of mathematical epistemology. Part of the attraction of modern-day Galois theory to me lay in the fact that its study continued to require heavy computation: despite theoretical advances, working out specific examples of polynomials with certain properties required time, patience, and, in many cases, a computer. Raised on a variety of computers during elementary school, I felt comfortable with the tools of computation and the requisite programming to wield them, and my intuition was that a subject where mathematicians gained understanding from nontrivially computed examples would suit me well. If I could do nothing else, I could try to compute more examples. While such computation may seem tedious, it reassured me of the validity of my area of study, for I could, in a sense, put my hands on the mathematical objects.

Regarding mathematics as a whole, I was not so confident. My aesthetic sense then was, and still is, limited by my concerns about mathematical foundations—concerns shared by many mathematicians in this century. There are countless theorems unverifiable by computation, some of which are proved "by contradiction": we assume the opposite and derive an absurdity, thereby mandating the original statement. The minority of mathematicians who insist on such verification, or refuse the appeal to the law of the excluded middle, call themselves constructivists, and they do not permit themselves to see as truth the full extent of mathematics generally accepted.

While this debate amounts to a disagreement on axioms and rules of proof, an issue far worse for a guarantee of mathematical truth lies underneath. Gödel's famous incompleteness theorem shows that any system of mathematical axioms sufficient to describe the arithmetic of the integers must be incomplete in the sense that there will always be questions in the language of arithmetic that cannot be proved true or false. This theorem either limits the extent of mathematics as we know it or raises serious doubts concerning its internal validity, for there may exist contradictions that we cannot reach. By choosing Galois theory, I chose an area of mathematics that I could believe was true and that displayed qualities I instinctively appreciated. Even today, however, I cannot remain entirely confident about the truth of the entire enterprise of mathematics.

Apart from these epistemological considerations, my aesthetic sense grew beyond its seeds. I had expected this sense to grow by imitation in the soil of my close work with an eminent mathematician, but fate would not have it. Having made my choice of a research area, and given our small department, I was limited to asking one particular professor to be my adviser. My exchanges with that professor in large part helped to form my aesthetic. By treating me as an equal, by recoiling from instructing me in such lines, he forced me to develop my own aesthetic. In our first, short conversations we discussed little, agreed on little, and only sketched out how I might occupy myself—a far cry from what I had expected. When I asked to become his student, he replied that we did not want to be too hasty, that I should read some papers and study some books and then come and talk about them. I asked some questions, he pointed me to new books and papers, and we went on. Finally he began suggesting little problems to consider. These solutions themselves would not be publishable material; they simply honed my skills, as a painter experiments with techniques.

Months passed before I discovered that I had in fact gained an adviser. It was only after I generalized slightly a proposition in a paper that he instructed me to send a letter to Germany informing the author about the new result, saying, "Tell her who you're a student of and so on." For years our relationship continued on this basis. When I proved something of some significance, he accepted the announcement, placed my written work on the top of a mound of papers on his desk, and calmly suggested something further I might consider. At other times, after waiting for him to return to his office (he refused to make appointments), I descended upon him with a long description of my discouragement, detailing the ways I had, to no avail, tried to prove some conjectures. In his responses he maintained a consistent implacability: "Well, it's hard," he would say, through a small smirk.

Enduring his dry sense of humor, almost imperceptible encouragement, and brutal honesty, I gradually began to evaluate my own thoughts about mathematics. I realized that I would not have to see mathematics the way someone else saw it; I would have neither that luxury nor that burden. I did learn what it

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signified to have a lifetime career of mathematics, watching my adviser think and solve in his office, bringing to bear results and techniques of which I had only a vague knowledge. I then slowly contemplated several questions I had never asked, including why I was in graduate school, what I saw in mathematics, and how I would gain intuition.

Forced to encounter mathematical reality on my own, to contribute originally and unassisted, I found deep beauty, formed an aesthetic, and approached mathematics accordingly. My own work initially lacked beauty, as I worked first on making small generalizations and computing previously unknown examples. Later, I began to recognize the motivating ideas behind collections of papers, to realize which techniques were standard and which were clever or even brilliant, and to view my area of research from several perspectives. The theorems I found beautiful were powerful yet simple—at once wide-ranging in application and simple in connecting crucial concepts. The mathematical results did not need to be abstract and far removed from the processes of computation to earn my appreciation; to theorems that aided computation, pitched at the level of someone who routinely "gets his hands dirty," I accorded a separate beauty, spurning the pure mathematician's urge to label such work trivial.

My aesthetic, while providing a framework from which I can judge others' work, perhaps most influences my current research. Certain problems, although I believe them to be solvable, do not seem to advance the beauty of mathematics; to other problems, I realize I lack a pleasing insight. How can I know whether a year's effort will produce the solution to a problem of my own choosing? I cannot know, and so I rely on my intuition, coupled with my aesthetic, in assessing whether my ideas have merit. Every mathematician must possess such an aesthetic, which, whether it be tainted by pressures to produce or the desire to ride the crest of a trend, ultimately determines his or her contributions as a scholar.

My journey has led me a great distance, from the bewilderment of standing aloof from a dimly perceived yet great tower of implications to the privilege of enjoying the wide culture of mathematics. My intellectual socialization, my assimilation into the mathematical world, provides me with the sense to grasp the forms of mathematical reality, to discover the beauty and structure there, to strive to communicate it to others. Mathematical research, I see now, is less a sterile tower than a living tree, one that grows in accordance with the artistic tastes of a somewhat secluded and specialized society of arborists. Implications and consequences are what we as mathematicians are about, just as words are essential to the poet and wood to the craftsman, but we hope to answer natural and frequently naive questions about the logical structures we encounter in our mathematical reality. The questions asked must be simple, following smoothly from ones asked earlier, although it may require brilliance to perceive the natural following question. Our quest expresses a desire for beauty, following the aesthetic intuition of individuals; this desire is that same desire shared by those working in literature and art. At its best, mathematics responds elegantly and efficiently to some of the most natural and enduring of questions—not of human nature, but of rationality itself.

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Walking Through Different Groves with Sir George

A. PETER BROWN

There can hardly be more than a few readers of THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR who have not received promotional material for the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, which, since its publication in 1980, continues to be forcefully marketed. Unlike the previous versions, this, the sixth edition, has spawned an industry of music reference works, including dictionaries of musical instruments (1984), American music (1986), jazz (1988), and four information-packed volumes on opera (1992). In addition, updated versions of the composer articles from the main dictionary have been published separately—for example *The New Grove Haydn*—and a one-tome version (1988) of the original twenty volumes has been published. Rumor has it that these enterprises were so successful that they resulted in unexpected returns on Macmillan's six-million-pound investment, and there are plans for a seventh edition.

One wonders what Sir George Grove (1820–1900), the founding editor, would have thought of the latest version of his *Dictionary*, dubbed by Charles Rosen a "musicological marvel." Although today we might regard him as a musicologist, Grove always viewed himself as an amateur. Even as late as 1895 he began a talk at the Musical Association by noting: "My remarks this evening are not to be taken as those of a musician, to which character I cannot pretend." Whether Grove really believed in his own self-deprecation cannot now be easily determined. He certainly felt something amiss for his lack of a university education—he was instead apprenticed to the famous Scottish civil engineer Alexander Gordon. Grove was mostly self-educated and gained his learning through diligence, hard work, keen powers of observation, and a brilliant intellect. Combined with his immense energy, these attributes resulted in a life consumed by multiple activities and varied accomplishments on a scale, even for Victorians, that nearly defies belief.

The son of a London fishmonger, Grove was self-taught in music. In his youth he obtained a piano-vocal score to Handel's *Messiah*, from which he learned to read notation. After the opening of the new reading room at the British Museum, Grove over time examined numerous books and musical compositions. Through his power to absorb detail, he became not only a master of applied technology, but an artistically oriented humanist.

Admitted to the Institution of Civil Engineers at the age of nineteen, Grove was dispatched within three years to his first major undertaking: the building of the lighthouse on Morant Point in Jamaica. Later, he executed a similar project at Gibb's Hill in Bermuda. Subsequent assignments included projects for the London and Birmingham Railway, the Chester Railway Station, and the Britannia Bridge across the Menai Strait. But, after little more than a decade as an engineer, Grove found his humanistic endeavors more satisfying. The offer of the position as secretary of the Society of the Arts enabled him to turn his pleasurable pursuits into a profession that lasted more than four decades. (Today, his job might be described as that of an arts

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administrator.) But Grove became more than a shuffler of papers and issuer of directives; he possessed the imagination to bring both the common and not-so-common man and woman into the realm of learning.

As secretary of the Society of the Arts, Grove became associated with the Great Exhibition of 1851 held at Paxton's Crystal Palace, which became emblematic of England's "great progress" during Victoria's reign. One of his duties was to engage eminent intellectuals to give lectures having popular appeal. Although the opening ceremony on May 1 was, in the words of the Prince of Wales, musically "below criticism," Grove must have realized the potential for such an exhibition space to offer the best in education, music, and other entertainments to the public at large.

When the Great Exhibition closed, the Crystal Palace was dismantled, removed from Hyde Park, and re-erected at Sydenham. Paxton's glass and iron building reopened in June 1854, with George Grove serving as secretary to the new corporation. A visit to the Palace became an event both enlightening and entertaining, with all sorts of concerts and exhibitions that transported one either to such exotic locations as Egypt and Syria or back in time to medieval Germany and England. The Palace featured "courts" exhibiting aspects of Roman, Byzantine, Elizabethan, and Italian life, as well as displays of industrial accomplishments and natural history. One could also be amused by variety shows and trained animals. There were displays of dogs, cats, chrysanthemums, and much more. As at the original Great Exhibition, the new Crystal Palace offered lectures and eventually provided instruction in music, the fine arts, languages, engineering, and sport. The Palace combined the elements of a London pleasure garden, a vaudeville show, a museum, a concert hall, and an institution of continuing education. For almost twenty years, Grove was one of the visionaries behind this grand Victorian institution. His ability to pursue additional undertakings in a serious way speaks to the strength and concentration he brought to his pursuits.

Grove's knowledge of literature was deep and wide-ranging. His capacious mind held large portions of Shakespeare and the Bible, as well as poetry both old and new. Grove wrote relatively little literary criticism, but he published two essays on Alfred Lord Tennyson, whose work he greatly admired. Grove's approach to literature as well as to music defies pigeonholing. At times his method is impressionistic; at others judicial. His essay in *Macmillan's Magazine* (1864) entitled "Tears, Idle Tears" is more than an explication of lines from Tennyson's *The Princess.* Grove's daughter Lucy had died in 1863, a blow from which he never recovered. Twenty-three years later he noted that "everything went into her grave and oh the difference to me! . . . It drove me into a new world of poetry, love, music, which has enormously extended my life and my sympathies."

Unlike Grove's "dictionary" prose style, which usually reflects the coolness of the engineer, his essay on Tennyson's lines has an emotion that almost turns his prose into poetry.

> "IDLE tears" they may be—for what tears in this world are not idle?—but still the saddest that ever flowed from human eye. Tears of joy, tears of pity, are to be found elsewhere; but such tears of desolate, hopeless, unrelieved misery, are recorded in no literature, are preserved in no lachrymatory, ancient or modern. Each stanza contains an image or images, and each hopelessly, irretrievably mournful, draw from the very abyss of sorrow. Ever the "happy autumn fields" and the bright beam of morning, glorifying our friends' return, borrow the despairing hues of the rest.
>
> The theme is the irrecoverable past—"the days that are no more"—exhibited to us in the several aspects of their freshness, their sadness, their strangeness, their dearness, their sweetness, their depth, and their wild regret.

Later Grove compares the poem to music by his favorite composers:

> Wallis's picture of Chatterton is full of desolation; but it is far below this poem, because *there* the struggle is over—*here* it is still going on. Schumann's Overture to Manfred is equally gloomy, and equally touching. It is, however, a more extended work in every way. The nearest parallel in music must, perhaps, be looked for in Schubert's works—at the base of which, almost without exception, there lies a profound melancholy. The Songs of "Das Wirtshaus," or the "Todesmusik" (Op. 108), are those which occur to me as the most suitable. But, indeed, such parallels are never quite satisfactory, if only from the fact that, owing to the necessary form, there are fewer ideas in music than in poetry, though perhaps as many emotions.

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Normally a facile writer, in this piece Grove must have labored over both rhetoric and tone to communicate a precise personal emotion.

Today we might smile at Grove's admiration for Tennyson, then poet laureate, who was, in his view, the greatest English man of letters since Shakespeare. But to claim that his admiration grew solely out of their friendship is to call into question Grove's basic integrity. He first met Tennyson in 1854 on Crystal Palace business; Grove wished to have an ode for the opening of the building at Sydenham, and there was even a plan to ask Berlioz for a musical setting. Tennyson refused the offer, but it was the beginning, in Grove's words, of a "long and valuable" friendship. During Grove's tenure as editor of *Macmillan's Magazine*, Tennyson was a prized contributor.

Among the many other pursuits that took up much of Grove's extra time for some fifteen years (roughly from 1853 to 1868) were his biblical studies. The stimulus here was not religious conviction, but the prodding of his friend James Fergusson, a historian of architecture and adviser for the Assyrian Court at the Palace. Grove initially had no interest in biblical studies, as he reports in an autobiographical sketch from July 1880:

> What was it that altered my feeling? Why, the bitter complaint of my dear old friend James Fergusson (then a new friend) that there was no index of the proper names of the Bible. He was engaged then, as he has been ever since, in an internecine warfare with everybody who doubted his splendid theory that the round church in Jerusalem—the Mosque of Omar—was the church which Constantine built over the tomb of our Lord, or rather, what Constantine believed to be the tomb of our Lord. Fergusson and I used to meet at the Assyrian Court of the Crystal Palace and talk about many things, and this among them; and it was in one of these talks that he lamented that he could find no such list to support his argument. Well, we set to work at once, my wife and I, and we made a complete index of every occurrence of every proper name in the Old Testament, New Testament, and Apocrypha, with their equivalents in Hebrew, Septuagint Greek, and Latin.

If Fergusson provided an initial stimulus, it was Arthur Penrhyn Stanley, the future Dean of Westminster, who became perhaps the most powerful influence on Grove. With their friendship, their two gifted minds meshed. Dean Stanley valued Grove's wide knowledge and attention to detail and came to believe that he should "never write a book without a Grove . . . to correct references or proofs." When Stanley's *Sinai and Palestine* appeared in 1856, Grove was handsomely acknowledged.

No doubt prompted by Stanley, Grove traveled to Palestine in 1859 and 1861. He never was again content to explore a topic from a distance; just as he later traveled to Vienna and Leipzig to absorb the environments of Beethoven, Schubert, and Mendelssohn, Grove needed to see the places he had untangled from their multiple-language confusions and corrupted spellings. The trips resulted in numerous informative entries in his notebooks, but only one fascinating publication resulted, "Nabloos and the Samaritans," which appeared in 1862 as part of Francis Galton's *Vacation Tourists and Notes of Travel in 1861*. The essay overflows with reflections of Grove's own British mentality, but it is nonetheless marked by his unusual powers of observation. One is aware of the writer's musical and biblical interests, though not intrusively so. It reads rather like the work of an ethnologist in its comparisons of groups and their practices. Some of the observations and conclusions may reek of naïveté, but few learned men or women have written with comparable grace and clarity.

The Bible index made by Grove and his wife Harriet Bradley formed the backbone to the index of Stanley's *Sinai and Palestine*; it was also the basis of Grove's role in William Smith's three-volume *Dictionary of the Bible* (1860–1863), to which he contributed almost eight hundred entries covering more than eleven hundred pages, roughly one-third of the entire undertaking.

Grove's articles are marked by a variety of approaches. Most of those on place-names are perfunctory, though rich in biblical references. His section on the climate in Palestine is thoroughly the work of the technocrat. The article "Calvary" clarifies the name by taking into account multiple language renderings, while that on "Sab'aoth, The Lord of" begins by correcting Spenser, Bacon, Johnson, and Walter Scott. Perhaps his most inspired writing is found in his magisterial treatment of the prophet Elijah, which opens with hyperbolic flourishes.

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ELIJAH THE TISHBITE has been well entitled "the grandest and the most romantic character that Israel ever produced." Certainly there is no personage in the O.T. whose career is more vividly portrayed, or who exercises on us a more remarkable fascination. His rare, sudden, and brief appearances—his undaunted courage and fiery zeal—the brilliancy of his triumphs—the pathos of his despondency—the glory of his departure, and the calm beauty of his reappearance on the Mount of Transfiguration—throw such a halo of brightness around him as is equalled by none of his compeers in the sacred story.

Whatever difficulties the production of these volumes may have caused Grove, it was another experience that helped prepare him for his own *Dictionary of Music and Musicians.*

As if he had not had enough to keep him occupied at the Crystal Palace and with various publications, Grove also became in 1865 the honorary secretary of the Palestine Exploration Fund and undertook in 1868 the editorship of *Macmillan's Magazine.* This hyperactive thinker and energetic doer rarely used his editorial prerogative to publish his own work or propagate his own views. Instead, he used the pages of the *Daily News, Pall Mall Gazette, St. James's Gazette,* the *Times,* and other publications. During his fifteen years as editor, Grove contributed only two items to *Macmillan's* pages. The first in 1873 was in defense of Edmund Deutsch, whose article on the Talmud (*Quarterly Review,* 1867) had been criticized in the *Edinburgh Review* (1873–74) for its superficiality. Grove had known Deutsch as both a friend and a scholar—he was a contributor to the *Dictionary of the Bible.* Grove's response could be viewed as his personal credo, a stand against the pretension and artificiality that often characterized learned discourse.

Grove's other essay, which appeared in 1869, was a review of an annotated edition of the New Testament, which was published as the thousandth volume of Baron Tauchnitz's *Collection of British Authors.* Here Grove compares the then-received text with variants from the then "three oldest manuscripts": the Vatican MS (Rome), the Alexandrine MS (British Library), and the Sinaitic MS (St. Petersburg). As Grove points out, many of the differences are clarifications and do not essentially change the text's meaning, but others not found in these manuscripts "contain some of the characteristic and 'Christian' sentiments in the whole of the New Testament" (for example, the absence of the tale of the "adulterous woman" of John 7:53–8:11). Citations of such textual variants exemplify Grove's lifelong effort to clarify everything he pursued. He was not a man of blind faith but a careful sifter of evidence; he wanted to reveal, as much as possible, historical truths. In this sense, he stood at the vanguard of biblical criticism.

Though Grove was a rare contributor to *Macmillan's* and his name never appeared on the masthead, he was not merely a glorified copy editor. Among other attributes, Grove had an uncanny ability to identify writers whose work had more than ephemeral significance. Besides Tennyson, his contributors included Matthew Arnold, George Eliot, Victor Hugo, Thomas Henry Huxley, Christina Rossetti, Robert Louis Stevenson, Harriet Beecher Stowe, and Anthony Trollope. Although fiction, poetry, literary criticism, and other articles of general interest dominated *Macmillan's,* its pages also dealt with current social concerns. Essays appeared on the women's issues of the day (including education and political participation), the poor and their attendant problems (including homelessness), European unification, Darwinism, religion, and the arts.

Still, it was music that continued to fascinate George Grove throughout his life, from his early study of Handel's *Messiah* to the last program he attended in the spring of 1899 at the Crystal Palace, where the violin soloist was Joseph Joachim. During the many hours spent in the British Museum, he copied and made scores of a variety of works from three centuries of musical history. He recorded his reactions to this repertory in notebooks that he kept with an obsession comparable to that of Beethoven, the composer he most admired. Grove was also an avid concertgoer; even during his years of association with the Crystal Palace, he was often seen at other London musical venues. One of his lifelong regrets, however, was that he never attended one of Mendelssohn's concerts.

Grove first became known for his musical pursuits because of the program notes he composed for the Saturday orchestral concerts at the Crystal Palace. He wrote his first

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"analytical" paragraphs for the Mozart centenary concert in 1856. For Grove, "analytical" had nothing to do with the arcane practices of modern musical analysis aimed at the professorial class in musicology and music theory; Grove's central purpose was to help the listener better understand what was to be heard. Grove's notes almost always contain a historical introduction, a detailed description of the work's events, and an aesthetic evaluation that carefully expresses his own level of enthusiasm.

Grove's language is often in its own way revealing of the work. Excerpts from his notes for Beethoven's Symphony No. 5 Opus 67 and Schubert's "Great" C Major Symphony D.944 provide excellent examples:

> It [Beethoven's Symphony No. 5] was so strong, so brilliant, so peculiar, and so romantic, and, it may be added, so short, that it forced people to attend to it. . . . In Paris, in London, everywhere else, the C minor Symphony has been the harbinger of the Beethoven religion. It astonished, it puzzled, it even aroused laughter, but it could not be out done, and in time it subdued its listeners, and led the way for all the others of the immortal Nine. It introduced a new physiognomy into the world of music—its opening, so short and abrupt that it would be almost comic if it were not so terrible, its *Scherzo* so mystical, its *Finale* so extraordinarily noble and magnificent.
>
> The [Schubert] Symphony in C major is indeed the culminating work of Schubert's life. It may not have the peculiar, almost unearthly tone of wild, mystical, tender melancholy that marks the two movements in B minor (No. 8) and the Entr'actes in Rosamunde, but it has a very large share of those ethereal qualities, while there is about it a force and majesty, and a luxuriance of life from beginning to end, a wealth of invention and a variety of treatment, a command over the resources of the orchestra and a tremendous energy, which make it one of the most astonishing productions in the whole *répertoire* of music. No doubt its length is a certain drawback to its general acceptance. Extension, or repetition, was a quality of Schubert's artistic nature as much as compression was of Mozart's; and we must take him as we find him, and be thankful for the possession. When he has invented a fine passage he never seems happy till he has had it all over again, and made all his friends share in his good fortune. But to be long is not always to be tedious; and a piece of music, like a poem, may be long, because it contains a great number of fine themes treated with infinite variety and ever-fresh charm.

For the Beethoven article, Grove uses a series of short declarations reminiscent of Beethoven's own pithy motivic repetitions in the symphony's first movement. In contrast, the Schubert is described in longer statements, resembling the composer's more leisurely and repetitive approach in what Robert Schumann called the "Symphony of Heavenly Lengths." When Grove writes of the work's length, he is perhaps recalling his own concerns when, in 1856, August Manns first conducted Schubert's masterpiece at the Crystal Palace. It was split and played at two concerts: the audience heard the first three movements on April 5 and then had to wait until July 11 for the finale, when it was performed together with a repeat of the second and third movements. After this London revival, the "Great" eventually became an almost annual event at the Saturday Concerts. As Grove's enthusiasm grew, the Crystal Palace became known as Schubert's English home, since all the other Schubert symphonies were also first heard in London under Manns's direction.

Grove and Manns formed a complementary team. Manns was interested in an ever-expanding repertoire, and this in turn stimulated Grove's tireless mind to learn about the music and to uncover further works for revival. Under Manns's direction the Palace Orchestra performed not only all of Schubert's symphonies and the *Rosamunde* music, but also all of the orchestral works of Schumann, overtures and excerpts from Wagner's operas, and the orchestral music of Johannes Brahms. Also championed were the works of a number of British composers, among them Arthur Sullivan, Charles Villier Stanford, and Hubert Parry.

Manns's advocacy of the composer's own text places him among the first of the musicologically oriented conductors. When criticized for not using Richard Wagner's orchestration for Beethoven's Symphony No. 9, Manns cogently defended his position of maintaining the composer's own sonorities. His association with the scholarly Grove brings to mind some recent large-scale recording projects undertaken with a scholar/adviser.

Just as the topography of Palestine had increased Grove's enthusiasm for his studies of the Bible, his journeys to the Continent, where he met men and women who had known and studied the composers he revered

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so highly, enhanced the joy he found in musical research. The first of these trips, in 1867, had as its main destination Vienna, scene of the triumphs of Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, and Schubert. In the Imperial city, Grove and his friend Arthur Sullivan went in search of music by Schubert, recovering some of his early symphonies, a few overtures, and the remaining music of *Rosamunde.* Aided by the archivist to the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde, Carl Ferdinand Pohl, they copied the *Rosamunde* material at the law offices of Dr. Eduard Schneider. Afterward, as an expression of Entdeckungsfreude, Sullivan and Grove played leapfrog. Before departing Vienna, Grove—almost certainly through the good offices of Pohl—met Brahms, whom he found different from his probably youthful likenesses: "hair short, face more practical and less sentimental."

Grove went on to Prague, Dresden, and then Leipzig, where Bach, Schumann, and Mendelssohn had spent decisive periods. At the Gewandhaus concerts, works by Sullivan were performed, and Grove observed the audience's reaction:

> I begin to understand the difference between the Germans and us in the matter of music, and to see the reason why they don't like Mendelssohn. To please them, everything must be dreadfully grim and earnest, and as soon as a bit of tune comes, they think it all "ganz trivial"—a state of mind which I hope we shan't get into.

These trips to the Continent and Grove's growing position in London's musical life provided a network of contacts. He was also to meet Liszt, Wagner, Dvořák, and Joachim Raff, as well as many musical scholars who provided the resources upon which he would ultimately draw for *The Dictionary of Music and Musicians.*

Macmillan announced the *Dictionary*'s publication in January 1874. The plan was for a two-volume set of not more than 600 pages each—an underestimation, for the end result was four volumes totaling 3,125 pages. Here again, the prospectus sets out some of its editor's familiar goals:

> There is no book in English from which an intelligent inquirer can learn, in small compass, and in language which he can understand, what is meant by a Symphony or Sonata, a Fugue, a Stretto, a Coda, or any other of the technical terms which necessarily occur in every description or analysis of a concert or a piece of music; or from which he can gain a readable and succinct account of the history of the various branches of the art, or of use and progress of the pianoforte and other instruments, or the main facts and characteristics of the lives of eminent musicians. Such questions are now constantly occurring to those who five-and-twenty years ago would never have thought of them.

Grove's reader was not the academic but the "intelligent inquirer." The articles should be clear, brief, and based on fact. The demand for the *Dictionary* itself was a sign of an increasingly educated public. In other words, Grove viewed his activities as a musical advocate and educator at the Crystal Palace as a great success, fostering the need for a multi-volume reference work for this new and curious populace. One of his dictionary's special attributes was comprehensiveness; previously available in English were separate biographical and terminological dictionaries, but no single work had offered both aspects with such thorough coverage.

It had been nearly a half century since any important musical reference work had appeared in English; many of the composers who had become favorites at the Crystal Palace and other London concert halls were, except for Grove's own "analytical programme notes," not so well known, including Schubert, Schumann, Berlioz, Wagner, Liszt, and Brahms. As Grove might have put it, the progress of music during the first seventy-five years of the nineteenth century also needed its own accounting.

Grove the raconteur, Grove the persuader, Grove the organizer, and Grove the intellectual came into concinnity and produced the *Dictionary.* In recruiting contributors, he was not always able to persuade busy and single-minded scholars to contribute in their area of expertise. Alexander Wheelock Thayer, for example, did not write any extended articles, but this supreme American scholar, diplomat, and biographer of Beethoven did answer Grove's own queries for the Beethoven essay written by the editor himself. Among the Continental contributors to the first edition of *Grove* were Carl Ferdinand Pohl—the pre-eminent authority on Joseph Haydn and music in

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Vienna, and the author of the Mozart article; Gustave Chouquet, the director of the Paris Conservatory Museum, contributed on French topics; and Philipp Spitta wrote on Robert Schumann, Carl Maria von Weber, and Johann Sebastian Bach.

Despite his efforts to internationalize the *Dictionary*, the contributors Grove corralled were in the main British teachers, writers, and critics. Among the better known were Edward Dannreuther, J. A. Fuller-Maitland, A. J. Hipkins, Hubert Parry, Ebenezer Prout, W. Barclay Squire, and John Stainer. This English dominance persisted until the 1980 edition, in which a true international collaboration was achieved. As in the earlier *Dictionary of the Bible*, Grove was more than an administrative editor; he wrote more articles than anyone else. The territory covered in the editor's contributions, even if many of them are not extensive, is staggering. Historically they range from the Renaissance to Grove's own time. While we might not think of Grove as a connoisseur of opera, a number of his pieces are about opera. But the essays on Beethoven, Schubert, and Mendelssohn in their size and detail dwarf all the other articles. In fact, their size is far out of proportion to those on J. S. Bach, Joseph Haydn, and W. A. Mozart. If he could have managed it, Grove would probably also have written on Schumann; but in light of his other responsibilities, this proved impossible.

Grove preferred that the *Dictionary* articles convey the material in a straightforward, factual way with little evidence of a critical view. In his own piece on Beethoven, he attempts this method. In its last portion, where he depends heavily on the study of Beethoven's music by Edward Dannreuther that appeared in *Macmillan's Magazine* (1876), Grove acknowledges his debt and states that he would have quoted it more extensively except that "the style of his remarks is not suited to the bald rigidity of a dictionary article." The importance of the Beethoven essay lies not only in its originality, but also in its bringing into one place much information not previously available in English.

Grove's ideal was the accurate presentation of facts, but he was still a man bound by the ideas of his time, from which fate not even his own discipline could free him. One of the assumptions of the era was that the "great men" were also persons of high ideals and morality. Thus, the traits of Beethoven that were unacceptable to a Victorian were either off-limits or needed to be ascribed to the bad influence of another party; for example, Beethoven's amanuensis Karl Holz "induced . . . Beethoven to forsake his usual sobriety, and to do that which has been absurdly exaggerated into a devotion to drink." Grove's description of Beethoven's physiognomy takes on both a poetic and an almost au courant phrenological stance.

> He had the breadth of jaw which distinguishes so many men of great intellect; the mouth firm and determined, the lips protruded with a look almost of fierceness: but his eyes were the special feature of the face, and it was in them that the earnestness and sincerity of his character beamed forth. They were black, not large but bright, and when under the influence of inspiration—the *raptus* of Madame von Breuning—they dilated in a peculiar way. His head was large, the forehead both high and broad, and the hair abundant.

Still, Grove's original Beethoven article began a tradition of excellence that has been maintained in the entirely new article by Joseph Kerman and Alan Tyson for the sixth edition.

The reverence Grove expressed for Beethoven's art was rivaled by his particular enthusiasm for Franz Schubert. For Grove, the propagation of Schubert's music became almost a mission. In the autumn of 1880, Grove returned to Vienna to examine again the Schubert manuscripts and to collect more documentary information. The Schubert article was shaped like the Beethoven essay as a year-by-year survey followed by some notes on bibliographic and stylistic matters. But one thread is continued throughout: Schubert was an unappreciated and impoverished genius. Grove was not alone in this view; it dominated writings on Schubert until the one-hundred-fiftieth anniversary of his death in 1978. But from research carried out by Otto Biba, it now seems clear that the economic problems Schubert had were brought about by poor management rather than by lack of income. In his lifetime, Schubert was in fact one of the most popular and best remunerated composers active in Biedermeier Vienna.

The list of works in the first edition of the *Dictionary* demonstrates Grove's contribution

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to the clear chronological accounting of Schubert's output. Grove did, however, become too attached to his idea that one of Schubert's works had been lost in Vienna, the so-called Gmunden/Gastein Symphony composed during the summer of 1825. This became a point of irritation to his friend Carl Ferdinand Pohl, who oversaw one of the most important collections of Schubert autographs. As it turns out, the Gmunden/Gastein Symphony was an earlier version of the "Great" C Major Symphony, which can be confirmed by the watermarks of the autograph. (Despite the reasonably tight evidence that the "Great" C Major was begun in 1825 when Schubert spent the summer in Gmunden and Gastein, a new Symphony in E Major has been recently claimed and recorded as this work. It is nothing more than an awkward stitching together of themes from other Schubert compositions, almost certainly a forgery perpetrated long after the composer's death.)

Even though Grove recognized that as a composer Felix Mendelssohn stood at a lower site on Parnassus than Beethoven and Schubert, he felt a special personal sympathy for the man and his compositions. Both Grove and Mendelssohn possessed a boundless energy and were vessels of multiple talents. Felix Mendelssohn, perhaps the most successful prodigy in musical history, was a composer, a conductor, a pianist, a talented landscape artist, and—like Grove—an able administrator. A man of wide and liberal learning, a gregarious personality, he founded the Leipzig Conservatory, which was to be a model for Grove in the formation of the Royal College of Music. The similarities of these two men are so close that, while reading Grove's account, one wonders if the author is doing something more than reflecting on the composer through his own Victorian environment; he seems at times to be writing of himself. Consider, for example, Grove's description of Mendelssohn's perpetual activity:

> How, in the middle of all this exciting and fatiguing work (of which we have given but a poor idea), he found time for composition, and for his large correspondence, it is impossible to tell, but he neglected nothing. On the contrary, it is precisely during this winter that he translates for his uncle Joseph, his father's elder brother—a man not only of remarkable business power but with considerable literary ability—a number of difficult early Italian poems into German verse. They consist of three sonnets by Boccaccio, one by Dante, one by Cino, one by Cecco Angiolieri, an epigram of Dante's, and another of Alfani's. . . . With irrepressible energy he embraced the first moment of an approach to leisure, after what he describes as a "really overpowering turmoil," to write a long and careful studied official communication to the Kreis-Director, or Home Minister of Saxony, urging that a legacy recently left by a certain Herr Blümner should be applied to the formation of a solid music academy at Leipzig. This was business; but, in addition, during all these months there are long letters to Hiller, Chorley, his mother, Fanny, Paul, and Fürst (and remember that only a small part of those which he wrote has been brought within our reach); and yet he managed to compose both the Lobgesang and the Festgesang for the Festival in commemoration of the invention of Printing, which was held in Leipzig on June 25, the former of which is as characteristic and important a work as any in the whole series of his compositions.

One wonders if Mendelssohn perhaps became an ideal with which Grove may have had difficulty coping. Although both were extraordinarily accomplished, Mendelssohn had a happy and fulfilling family life, a state that eluded Grove, who was becoming ever more distant as he grew older.

While Grove the public man was a figure of astonishing accomplishment and perpetual energy, the private person could not quite match the external Victorian ideals of conduct and optimism embodied in Mendelssohn's image. As Percy M. Young has pointed out in his 1980 biography, Grove had a son, George Grove Blackwell, out of wedlock in 1842; he faced a deteriorating marriage and homelife and carried on an affair of the heart with Edith Oldham, an Irish student at the Royal College of Music in the 1880s. So plagued by continual self-doubt and periods of depression, Grove may well have used his overwork and perpetual activity as an escape from the deep loneliness about which he wrote to his friends.

If Grove seems less the advocate for Mendelssohn, it was because in Victorian England Mendelssohn had already achieved substantial popularity and was seen as a successor to Handel. Mendelssohn's oratorio *Elijah* was received as a worthy consort to Handel's *Messiah*. To Grove as well as to many others,

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Mendelssohn was the quintessential British composer, even though, like both Handel and Haydn, he had not a drop of English blood in his veins.

Apart from the *Dictionary*, Grove also produced two further studies that add to his musicological accomplishments. "The History of a Musical Phrase" ran serially in *The Musical World* from October 2, 1886, to May 14, 1887. A more accurate title would substitute *motive* for *phrase*, since Grove traces appearances of a three-note cell, perhaps best known today as the beginning of the finale to Mozart's Jupiter Symphony K.551. That this pitch series has a long tradition cannot be denied, yet one might certainly question the relevance of what Grove is doing; K.551 really deals not with a three- but a four-note unit.

One thing his study does reveal is the wide repertoire upon which Grove was able to draw. It includes examples spanning more than three centuries from Italy, Germany, England, and France and includes dozens of composers, often with several examples from each. One must realize that, at the time of writing, many of the works cited, particularly the earlier ones, were not yet published, or at least not easily available. This protracted study shows that, despite his claims, Grove was certainly no musical dilettante. "The History of a Musical Phrase" is the work of a serious student who could challenge and perhaps even exceed in knowledge most of the musical scholars of his time.

Grove had long considered publishing a selection of his analytical notes from the Saturday concerts, but he always hesitated. He viewed them as work in progress; over the years they were often adjusted to include new knowledge or reformulated critical views. However, he eventually reworked some of this material and expanded it into a book, *Beethoven and His Nine Symphonies*. For Mozart, Schubert, and Mendelssohn, special studies and "a life and works" had appeared in English, but by 1896 no biography or critical appraisal existed of Beethoven, a lack that appealed directly to Grove's special skills and interests. Inasmuch as Grove's book was the first to cover this symphonic canon, it was unusually successful. It reached a second edition within months of publication; a third edition appeared in 1898, and the book is still in print.

The differences between the analytical notes and their reincarnation as a book are worth noting. "Analytical notes" for the concert audience had to be direct and easily absorbed before or during a performance, while material for the book could be fuller, more detailed, something to be pondered at leisure by the reader. Some readers might still prefer the more easily digestible package of the less-comprehensive program notes. Yet in neither form does Grove lose his audience, largely because he avoids discussing technical matters. George Bernard Shaw gets to the heart of Grove's special qualities in his review of the Beethoven study:

> It may be asked why I have just permitted myself to write of so eminent a man as Sir George Grove by his initial. That question would not have been asked thirty years ago, when "G", the rhapsodist who wrote the Crystal Palace programs, was one of the best ridiculed men in London. At that time the average programmist would unblushingly write, "Here the composer, by one of those licenses which are, perhaps, permissible under exceptional circumstances to men of genius, but which cannot be too carefully avoided by students desirous of forming a legitimate style, has abruptly introduced the dominant seventh of the key of C major into the key of A flat, in order to recover, by a forced modulation, the key relationship proper to the second subject of a movement in F—an awkward device which he might have spared himself by simply introducing his second subject in its true key of C." "G," who was "no musician," cultivated this style in vain. His most conscientious attempts at it never brought him any nearer than "The lovely melody then passes, by a transition of remarkable beauty, into the key of C major, in which it seems to go straight up to heaven." Naturally the average Englishman was profoundly impressed by the inscrutable learning of the first style (which I could teach to a poodle in two hours), and thought "G's" obvious sentimentality idiotic. It did not occur to the average Englishman that perhaps Beethoven's symphonies were an affair of sentiment and nothing else. This, of course, was the whole secret of them. . . . I leave it to his old readers whether his huge success as a program writer was not due to the perfect simplicity with which he seized and followed up this clue to the intention of Beethoven's symphonies. He seeks always for the mood, and is not only delighted at every step by the result of his search, but escapes quite easily and unconsciously from the boggling and blundering of the men who are always

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wondering why Beethoven did not do what any professor would have done. He is always joyous, always successful, always busy and interesting, never tedious even when he is superfluous (not that the adepts ever found him so), and always as pleased as Punch when he is not too deeply touched.

During the 1880s and 1890s, Grove's prestige had so increased that his endorsement was repeatedly sought in the form of prefaces to books for the increasing number of English music enthusiasts. He wrote prefaces for Sebastian Hensel's *The Mendelssohn Family* (1882); Otto Jahn's *Life of Mozart* (1882); William Smith Rockstro's *Life of Handel* (1883); and the *Letters of Robert Schumann* (1888). This selection and chronological ordering were no accident—these were the very composers who were championed at the Crystal Palace: Handel and Mozart were the subject of special festivals, Schumann was a composer not fully appreciated in England until the Grove/Manns collaboration made his music familiar, and Mendelssohn was an established favorite. Among Grove's other prefaces were those to F. G. Edward's *The History of Mendelssohn's Oratorio Elijah* (1896) and Amy Fay's *Music Study in Germany* (1897). His preface to Joseph Bennett's book on Novello & Company, *A Short History of Cheap Music* (1887), must have held a special place for him; his earliest musical experience was with an expensive piano-vocal score to the *Messiah* in contrast to the lower-priced music at the end of the century. Here, Sir George reveals himself to be essentially of his time, expressing all the optimism of a Victorian believer in progress. His excitement for his own epoch seems almost strange when compared to the cynicism of our own time:

THE following record of the rise and progress of an eminent London publishing-house forms a chapter of extreme interest in the history of the century, and more especially of the reign of Queen Victoria. It furnishes a typical instance of the combination of intelligence, foresight, and energy, which distinguishes that period. It exemplifies the rise, we might almost say the creation, of a new intellectual class of people, and the prodigious progress that has been made in supplying that class, not with exciting and deleterious means of subsistence, but with the food best adapted for its solid growth. It chronicles an advance of which we may be proud in one of the highest departments of mental progress and one of the noblest of the arts—an advance which may claim a special merit among the great movements of the day, because music ministers to the imagination of man and leaves untouched his baser faculties. This may be emphatically said of the noble music which forms the foundation of the fabric raised by the house of Novello.

Moreover, this record shows how dependent men and things are on one another, and how secure those undertakings are which rise from small beginnings. Vincent Novello might have been as musical as he was, Alfred Novello as farsighted, and Henry Littleton as enterprising and as accurate; but it would all have been to no purpose but for the progress made in machinery and practical science, for the increase in communication, and for the removal of the taxes on literature, which have distinguished the reign of our beloved Sovereign; that removal being itself greatly aided by one of the three enlightened and energetic men just mentioned. The same causes which have created the immense periodical literature of our day have brought about the equally extraordinary cheap music which we now possess, and while they have given us the *Daily Telegraph* for a penny and the *Illustrated London News* for sixpence, have also given us a still more valuable acquisition—*The Messiah* and *Israel in Egypt* for a shilling. It is the division of labour, the spread of machinery, the extension of travelling and transport, the invention and use of labour-saving processes of all kinds unknown to former generations, and also the progress of education, helped by the foregoing mechanical improvements, and itself re-acting strongly on them—it is these characteristic achievements of the reign of Victoria which have effected so much in literature and music that is a mere common-place to us, but which to our fathers and grandfathers was unknown, unexpected, impossible, and, we may add, not desired, because the desire had not been evoked.

Sir George's last major undertaking was the establishment of the Royal College of Music, a task that called on all of his vitality and talents. His network of influence was stretched to its limits, and his abilities to persuade were severely tested. When the Royal College opened its doors in 1883, Sir George became its first director. Believing as he did in a well-rounded liberal education, he was an ideal person for this post, intending more for the Royal College than the traditional myopic conservatory training. In his decade of leadership, the Col-

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lege became known for the quality of its faculty, for the talent of its students, and for its director, who goaded his charges to broaden their interests—in his opinion, a necessary step to make them better musicians. As in his search for contributors to the *Dictionary*, Grove did not always get the faculty he wanted, but he was able to hire Charles Villiers Stanford, Hubert Parry, Walter Parratt, and other eminent English musicians. Among those with international reputations whom he could not snag was the violinist, composer, and conductor Joseph Joachim, but he did capture Jenny Lind-Goldschmidt, the Swedish Nightingale and perhaps the most legendary singer of the nineteenth century.

For Grove the college became a way of life; no isolated office-bound administrator, he seemed ever present in the lunchroom and hallways. He practiced what today would be called "management by walking around." His annual addresses to the college, with their hyperbolic style, became legends of inspiration. The Royal College was Sir George's most lasting monument; it continues today to maintain the ideals of its founder and remains a first-class school.

In each field in which George Grove labored, his work was distinguished. It is especially striking that in all of his endeavors he presented his thoughts with unquestioned clarity and without pretension. Grove made it possible for others to continue his work, particularly his work for the arts. His "teaching" seldom took place in the classroom or lecture hall, but rather through his work as a writer and editor and as administrator of that Victorian icon the Crystal Palace and later of the Royal College of Music.

If not a saint by the unrealizable standards of Victoria's England, George Grove was in toto something considerably more than the public embodiment of the time's ideals. George Bernard Shaw exaggerated only slightly when he wrote in 1892 that Grove's "life-work has been of more value than all of the Prime Ministers of this century."

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Strangled Freedom

PETER FRUMKIN

Private philanthropic foundations have a freedom that few other institutions in America can match. This freedom springs from the fact that foundations are perhaps the only institutions in society that do not depend in any significant way on outside resources. Private grantmaking foundations are typically endowed in perpetuity and do not require a continual influx of capital to exist. They have no natural constituencies whom they must please, nor audiences to whom they must cater. And while most foundations strive to maintain good relations with the non-profit organizations that receive their grants, foundations have no long-term obligations to the many groups that benefit from their largesse. With a few exceptions, foundations are ultimately free to spend their money as they see fit, all the while enjoying the privileges of tax exemption.

The traditional rationale for giving philanthropic foundations such freedom is that independent institutions perform an important role in democracies. They provide citizens with alternative means for accomplishing collective goals and support a pluralistic society. Drawing on their wealth and independence, foundations are able to support projects that are too controversial for government to underwrite or not profitable enough for corporations to pursue. Because they do not answer either to voters or shareholders, foundations can—and for the most part, do—go their own way. A "third" or "independent" sector in society can pursue a broad and diverse range of collective goals. This putatively enhances a democracy by dispersing power beyond the traditional locales of government and business. Thus, free from the pressures of public opinion or the tyranny of profit, foundations are, by all appearances, ideally positioned to support a broad array of innovative organizations and projects. But do they?

To fulfill their function as independent institutions in a pluralistic society, foundations must display a certain pluralism or eclecticism within their own ranks, both in the grants they make and in their organizational structure. Unfortunately, this diversity is becoming increasingly rare in American philanthropy. Most of the large foundations have evolved into highly professional bureaucracies that look strikingly similar to one another in their organizational structure and grantmaking practices. Over time, this isomorphism will inevitably narrow the range of projects and approaches to social problems that foundations are likely to be willing to entertain. Why have foundations become increasingly homogeneous and more heavily bureaucratic when they enjoy such freedom? The answer to this question can be discovered in events that took place more than twenty-five years ago.

The year 1969 was in many respects a turning point in the history of American philanthropic foundations. While foundations had survived previous government investigations during the Progressive and McCarthy eras with little damage, public opinion eventually turned against philanthropy in the 1960s. The investigation of tax-exempt organizations, begun in 1961 and concluded in 1969, resulted in a clear and powerful shot fired across the bow of philanthropy. With the passage of the Tax Reform Act of 1969, and the new regulations on foundations this legislation entailed, American foundations would no longer be trusted to monitor themselves. The legislation—signed into law on December 31,

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1969—put in place a new and far-reaching set of financial regulations, operating requirements, and taxes on investment income that signaled the first major public challenge to the independence and autonomy of America's philanthropic foundations.

The regulations and taxes imposed in 1969 are seen by almost everyone working in philanthropy today as a major stumbling block in the development of American foundations. Yet, this emphasis on the punitive provisions of the Tax Reform Act of 1969 obscures more than it illuminates. Beyond the regulations that were enacted, trying to defend and explain philanthropy during the 1960s had even more far-reaching implications for the field. Fighting with Congress and ultimately failing to ward off regulations had a powerful organizational effect on American foundations themselves.

The complex legislative ordeal that culminated in the passage of new regulations sparked a realization among foundations that they needed to join together to form a more organized and cohesive group if further government intrusion into the philanthropic sector was to be avoided. Although foundation officials began their debate with Congress over the future of philanthropy as representatives of individual institutions, each with its own particular interests and agenda, these same officials emerged at the end with a determination to operate as a unified group. In the decades following the passage of the new regulations, foundations have grown even more adept at managing their relationship with government. In fact, many of the taxes and restrictions imposed in 1969 have been scaled back little by little over the past twenty-five years.

As foundations' ties were strengthened, new responsibilities and expectations emerged within philanthropy. By circling their wagons after 1969, foundations have ultimately limited the range of ideas that are pursued within philanthropy. In fact, the past twenty years have witnessed philanthropy's progressive homogenization and a growing move toward professionalization in the field. In this way, the real legacy of 1969 is not the appearance of constricting government regulations, but the birth of a unified field, with all the self-imposed constraints and conventions such a development engenders.

II

Congressional interest in scrutinizing the management practices of foundations started well before 1969. In 1961, Congressman Wright Patman, a Texas populist, launched what would become a seven-year personal crusade to make foundations accountable to the public. Patman's attack on the legitimacy and performance of American foundations began with a series of speeches that received prominent attention in the national media. Acting with only the help of a single assistant, Patman secured permission from the House Committee on Small Business to hold hearings to look into the potential threat tax-exempt organizations posed to business. Of course, as the investigation was broadened and extended over the years, Patman and his aide went far beyond fact-finding and holding hearings. Barely consulting other Committee members, they wrote and published more than five thousand pages of reports on the alleged abuses of America's elite philanthropic institutions. While some Congressmen would later lodge procedural objections to the independent and often political nature of the inquiry, Patman nevertheless managed, from 1962 to 1969, to carry on in his work largely unimpeded.

After compiling his data on the dimensions of philanthropic giving and the administration of foundations, Patman held a first set of brief hearings in 1964 at which his staff presented its findings. Representatives from the foundations were not invited to testify or allowed to respond to the Committee's charges of widespread mismanagement within the foundation world.

Three years and dozens of speeches later, Patman held a second set of hearings in the fall of 1967 at which the only topic discussed was the activities of Americans Building Constitutionally (ABC), an organization whose sole purpose was to help individuals avoid paying taxes by setting up foundations. ABC acted as financial consultant to its eight hundred clients, charging between $1,050 and $10,500 for information on the legal procedures required to set up foundations. The problem with ABC was that many of its members were using foundations merely as shelters through which to run businesses and to pay themselves fees. When ABC's three trustees appeared before Patman, they all refused to

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answer questions on the grounds that their answers might be self-incriminating. Soon after the hearings, ABC's trustees were indicted in California on charges of conspiracy to commit grand theft and fraud.

Foundations received a series of black marks in the late 1960s. Not only did Patman triumphantly unmask the fraudulent work of ABC, but other cases of abuse gained increased visibility: The Ford Foundation made a series of controversial grants in support of school decentralization in New York City and Chicano political organizing in San Antonio. Justice Abe Fortas was forced to resign from the Supreme Court over a $20,000-a-year consulting fee he received from the Wolfson Foundation. Questions were raised about the fees received by John Connally from the Sid W. Richardson Foundation and the payments to Justice Douglas from the Parvin Foundation. Incumbent Representative John Rooney revealed that the election campaign of his challenger, Frederick Richmond, received funds from a private foundation controlled by Richmond.

The Ford Foundation drew more fire for the grants it made in Cleveland to the Congress on Racial Equality (CORE) in support of the voter registration drive that led to the election of Carl Stokes, the first black mayor of a major American city. The Rockefeller Foundation drew attention for giving its former employee Dean Rusk a $40,000 stipend. Ferdinand Lundberg published his best-selling exposé, *The Rich and the Super-Rich*, which depicted foundations as nothing more than tax dodges. The Ford Foundation, yet again, made travel and study grants to eight former staffers of Robert Kennedy that were portrayed as secret financing for the Kennedy political machine.

The tide of negative publicity eventually led a few foundation officials to argue that, in order to stave off harsh punishment from government, foundations needed to take matters into their own hands. By 1968, one faction even suggested that the best course of action was for philanthropy to establish voluntarily a new set of regulations and principles for foundation governance. At the heart of this plan was a system of accreditation—one that would mirror in many respects that used by higher education. Under this system, foundations would submit themselves to regular review, agree to meet certain standards and practices, and be accredited by a board of experts.

But this proposal, along with a belated lobbying effort by foundation leaders, was not enough to stop the momentum that was building up against foundations. By 1969, too many ill-advised foundation grants had been located and exposed in the press. Although Congress had considered as punishment a requirement that all foundations expend all assets in forty years and go out of business, this proposal as well as a few others that were deemed too onerous were ultimately left out of the final bill. The Tax Reform Act did set in place the following new regulations on foundations: a 4 percent annual excise tax on net investment income, prohibitions against self-dealing, a 6 percent annual payout of assets, a 20 percent limitation on ownership of any corporation, and various public disclosure requirements.

In a 1970 speech to foundation officials, Alan Pifer, President of the Carnegie Corporation, reflected on the events of the past year:

> It was a period during which foundations were kicked in the shins and had their noses bloodied, and consequently we who work for them tend now to harbor an understandable sense of injustice. We resent the unfairness and shortsightedness of some of the features of the legislation and the extra administrative burden these will cause us. We resent the irrational emphasis placed by the Congress on a few uncharacteristic instances of administrative caprice in foundations and the excessive attention given to a few egregious cases of real abuse, while the overall positive record of foundations in American life was ignored. We resent the impression left with the public as a result of the legislation, that foundations were simply indicted, tried, found guilty and punished.

In the years following the Tax Reform Act of 1969, foundations went through a period of extensive self-evaluation. Pifer and other foundation leaders ultimately pulled closer together with the hope of finding ways to defend philanthropy from any further outside intrusion.

III

The Patman investigation and the Tax Reform Act of 1969 were important moments in

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the history of philanthropy, but not for the reasons most observers of philanthropy believe. To be sure, the new regulations imposed on foundations signaled the end of an era of foundation secrecy and privilege. Yet the larger, and lasting, effect of the legislative battle of 1969 was the constitution of a unified foundation world, replete with an expanded public relations and a new and more effective defensive apparatus aimed at warding off further outside interference.

The foundations, taken as a group, have come to stand first and foremost for the preservation and defense of philanthropy as a field of activity. The continuing work of the organized foundation field is twofold: first, to deflect and refute criticism mounted against it by government; second, to spread information about the good work of its members. Given the emergence of a united and defensively oriented foundation field, it is hardly a coincidence that, since 1969, criticism of philanthropy, either from government or from elsewhere, has been greatly muted.

Many are the signs that foundations have coalesced into a coherent field over the past two decades. Perhaps most obvious, communication and collaboration of all kinds and at all levels have increased among foundations. Not long ago foundations were afraid to be seen talking to one another. During the McCarthy era, foundations were investigated because Congress was concerned about the possible infiltration of philanthropy by subversives. Some saw in philanthropy a large conspiracy to undermine government policies through the funding of subversive organizations and individuals.

The struggle over the Tax Reform Act of 1969 erased any lingering fears foundations might have had over working closely together. Today, foundation staffs routinely meet at local and national gatherings to discuss various issues and common experiences. Telephone calls about the merits of specific grant requests that may be under review at several foundations are fairly standard. Foundation trustees have been brought more fully into the field through a growing network of boards that share trustees. A veritable chain links dozens of major foundations through trustees who sit on two or more boards simultaneously.

A dramatic increase in the flow of information about grantmaking has also contributed to the strengthening of the newly unified foundation world. Today, many publications cover developments within the nonprofit sector, from monthly newsletters published by regional associations of grantmakers to a national trade magazine, *Foundation News,* that was revamped and expanded immediately following the developments in 1969. Dozens of how-to books on philanthropy have been written that explain not just how to set up a foundation, but also how to administer it. The days of the idiosyncratic donor making gifts according to his personal interests and beliefs are clearly being challenged by all of the published advice on grantmaking circulated within the field.

The creation of a unified philanthropic field in the aftermath of government regulation has been pushed further along by an ethics code of sorts that foundations must embrace to be members of the Council on Foundations, the national association of grantmakers. After considerable debate in the early 1980s, the Council on Foundations propagated a set of "Principles and Practices of Effective Grantmaking," to which member foundations were expected to subscribe. The code met with resistance in some quarters, and a small group of dissenting foundations withdrew from the Council rather than sign allegiance to its principles. This group of conservatively oriented foundations argued that the propagation of the code was an intrusion into the independence of their institutions. But, in the end, most members ratified the principles and pledged their support to the Council's efforts to establish standards of professional philanthropy. In essence, the code reinforced philanthropy's commitment to regular practices in both grantmaking and internal staffing.

Foundations are scarcely equal in size or influence. A distinct center and periphery have emerged within the foundation field. At the center are the large and highly visible foundations, among them Ford, Rockefeller, Pew, and MacArthur. Around this center a constellation of smaller foundations gravitate, many of which look up to their larger brethren for guidance and direction. One of the most common ways foundations in the center exert their influence is by inducing peripheral foundations to join them in common projects or collaborative efforts. These jointly funded

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projects, ranging from research on public policy issues to new job-training programs, are an important feature of contemporary philanthropy.

An executive director of a small foundation enjoys telling the story of his introduction to philanthropy roughly a decade ago. When word of his selection was announced, he received an invitation to come to New York to meet the president of a very large foundation. While the newcomer thought he was going to have an informal chat, the session had the clear purpose of explaining "the rules of the game" within organized philanthropy, including guidelines on how to work with other foundations and grant-seeking organizations. For the newcomer to philanthropy, this meeting made it clear that philanthropy did indeed have standards and expectations, which all were expected to live by, no matter how much foundations touted their freedom and ability to innovate.

In the years following the passage of the Tax Reform Act, the Council on Foundations also transformed itself into a powerful and organized association. Over the past two decades, the Council's membership has doubled, then doubled again, and its presence and influence in Washington has steadily increased. In 1971, the Council took over publication of *Foundation News* and vowed in its first edition to strengthen the collective voice of philanthropy. In its annual report of 1970, it also began the practice of printing a "brief review of some members' 1970 grants," in order to "illustrate the remarkable variety and usefulness of the work of foundations that do not easily catch the public eye." The Council on Foundations has expanded its services to its members over the years, providing not just news and information, but consulting services and a powerful lobbying presence in Washington. Today, whenever the winds of reform start to blow in Congress and interest in increasing the payout requirement for foundations begins to brew, the Council rallies its members to educate legislators on the good work of philanthropy and the dangers of increased regulations.

Alongside the strengthening of the Council on Foundations, the 1970s witnessed an explosion in the formation of regional associations for grantmakers. While the Kansas City Association of Trusts and Foundations was founded in 1949, it was not until the 1970s that the idea caught on in other cities around the country. Soon there were regional associations of grantmakers in New York, Chicago, St. Louis, Pittsburgh, and southern California. Many of these new associations were financed initially by large regional foundations interested in increasing their ties to other local foundations. Some of these regional associations of grantmakers serve as professional networking hubs, while others provide grantmakers with a forum in which to discuss ideas and meet grant recipients.

Unity among foundations has brought with it some constraints, however. In the 1970s and 1980s, foundations began to define their missions more strategically and to restructure their organizations to meet new social problems. New grantmaking programs were defined and new staff hired to work in these divisions. Grant programs in community development, international peace, and the environment were added to old programs in health, the arts, and social service. Before long, most of the large and mid-sized foundations began to look more and more alike.

In their search for legitimacy and at least the aura of good management, foundations looked to the for-profit world for their model of organizational structure. Foundations divided their grantmaking into programs and hired professionals to work with the increasing number of non-profit organizations seeking foundation grants. But the quest for good management and the desire to expand staffing ultimately proved to be two irreconcilable goals. For, as foundations hired more staff and built new programs and divisions within their organizations, they ultimately created more decision levels and more bureaucracy—an unfortunate development in a field that has always prided itself on being able to react quickly to changing needs.

One foundation executive who established a youth agency more than a decade ago relates that, when he was just starting out, he had an idea for a program that would help young people find jobs. He wrote a letter to a trustee of a large foundation outlining his plans. A couple of weeks later a large check arrived in a windowed envelope, allowing him to start his organization. Ten years later, when requesting even small grants for his agency, the foundation executive must submit to a site

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visit by one of the foundation's program officers, make an office visit to see the program director, and wait for months for his proposal to be considered. And instead of just sending a letter, each year the request must include a long proposal, a detailed budget, audited financial statements, staff listings, and a narrative describing the activities conducted under the previous year's grant. In short, as the foundation's professional staff ballooned from a dozen to 150, the number of decision levels increased correspondingly. The transformation of this particular foundation from a free-wheeling grantmaker to a slow and cumbersome bureaucracy is linked directly to the broader trend in philanthropy of creating divisional structures and moving toward full professional staffing.

While there remain thousands of small, family foundations that are informally administered and minimally staffed, a new and growing class of mid-sized foundations has sought to mirror the staffing and divisional structure of the larger foundations. Even foundations with endowments as small as $100 million have taken steps to build their staffs, set up well-defined grantmaking programs, and operate like the big foundations. The divisional structure of foundations has made specialized expertise necessary—another development that has encouraged philanthropy to try to achieve the status of a profession.

As foundations have tried to build their legitimacy and raise public awareness of the contribution philanthropy makes to society, something essential has been lost. Foundations may be better managed and more professionally staffed than at any time in the past, but the growth of standards has brought with it an increasingly narrow vision of what philanthropy should support and what organizations are fit to receive foundation largesse. Not surprisingly, when one peruses the annual reports of foundations working in the same geographical area, the names of a small group of non-profit organizations begin to appear over and over again in the grant lists of foundations. Instead of charting new directions and redefining the spheres within which philanthropy might operate, all too many foundations simply passively follow the lead set by others.

As the formal structure of foundations has changed, subtler transformations have taken place within the staffs of foundations. Instead of recruiting generalists to philanthropy for short terms of service after careers in higher education or government, foundations have begun to rethink the work of grantmaking and to turn philanthropy toward the status of a profession.

IV

There are many indications that philanthropy has been moving in the direction of professions such as law and medicine. One the clearest signs is the production of university-trained experts in philanthropy. Over the years, there has been a dramatic growth in the number and quality of university programs aimed at training individuals for careers in the non-profit sector, which includes both grantmaking and grant-seeking organizations. Today, more than twenty different university-based programs prepare students for work in the non-profit sector. Even more specialized programs have emerged that are training the next generation of foundation professionals. Complementing this development has been the integration, at most major business schools, of a curriculum designed for those interested in managing non-profit organizations.

The growth of academic programs has been accompanied by the emergence of a vast wave of new research on philanthropy. Starting in 1974 with the creation of a national commission to organize research on the entire non-profit sector and continuing through with the creation in 1980 of an independent organization dedicated to encouraging research in this same sphere, philanthropy has been documented and studied more in recent years than ever before. Periodical indexes such as the Social Science Citation Index list a growing number of articles on foundations and philanthropy. The production of this new literature on philanthropy has been paid for by the foundations themselves, which have made substantial grants in support of research from historical, sociological, and economic perspectives.

The appearance of both university-based programs and a broad scholarly literature have increased the organizational salience of professional expertise within philanthropy. For many years, foundations hired well-

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rounded generalists for key program positions. Far from being a drawback, lack of experience in philanthropy was actually seen as an advantage: it assured that staff would not come to work with a fixed agenda or a set of preconceived notions. But over the past decade in particular, foundations have—especially at the program-officer level—begun to look for men and women with experience either in philanthropy or the non-profit sector.

Finally, no profession can prosper without associations through which knowledge and standards can be promulgated. The Council on Foundations and many of the regional associations of grantmakers have not only provided a place for foundation people to meet with one another but also a center from which professional standards are promulgated. Professional associations within philanthropy have offered increasingly elaborate training programs for new foundation workers. During the training sessions, the key professional skills in philanthropy are often covered, including proposal review, budget analysis, evaluation strategies, and the art of conducting a site visit. The growth of associations in cities around the country has played a crucial role in moving grantmaking toward the status of a profession by simply providing the channels through which dominant norms and practices are spread throughout the field.

All this, however, may obscure more than it illuminates. Professionalization in philanthropy remains a contested phenomenon. Resistance has surfaced. A concern over organizational control has tempered the move to professionalize foundation work. Within every foundation there is a tension between the board and the staff, between the private interests and the public responsibilities of the organization. While both staff and board are involved in the public grantmaking programs of the organization, directors have the additional duty to protect the institutional integrity and financial position of the foundation.

The complete professionalization of philanthropy has been consciously impeded by the worry that all this, if pushed too far, would tilt the balance of power in favor of the staff by curtailing the discretionary powers of directors in the areas of financial management, staff appointment, and long-term planning. The selection of board members remains largely a function of personal relationships, based frequently on family membership or business ties to the founder. When directors are chosen from outside the donor's inner circle—as they are in many of the larger foundations—the selection criteria rarely have anything to do with philanthropic expertise. Instead, eminent scientists, former government officials, and university presidents are often invited to join boards, because they are viewed as having the broad vision and judgment needed to oversee a complex organization. Lack of knowledge about philanthropy and an absence of experience in grantmaking are still considered positive characteristics in a director.

If the professionalization of foundations has proceeded unevenly, it may be owing to the jurisdictional disputes over philanthropy's proper province that have been fought over the past twenty-five years. As philanthropy has gained increasing visibility, it has fought two important boundary disputes: the first concerns foundations and government, while the second involves foundations and recipients of their grants.

One of the most important forces behind the professionalization of philanthropy has been the desire to eradicate those activities that caught the attention of Congress in the 1960s. Foundations went to great lengths in the 1970s and 1980s to demonstrate and publicize their good management, as well as to foster the idea that philanthropy must be protected from government regulation if it is to flourish. In this they have been successful. Since 1969 there has been no new regulation of philanthropy and many of the provisions of the Tax Reform Act of 1969 have been relaxed.

Rather than appear elitist by operating above the rest of the non-profit sector, foundations in the 1970s began to work in partnership with their recipient organizations. Foundation officials have sometimes taken to advising and assisting their grant recipients with the actual programs. In order to dispel concerns over accountability and social relevance, foundations have increasingly recruited from community-development corporations, non-profit educational groups, and private social service agencies. The goal of these changing hiring practices was to erase the image of the elite, disengaged, and unaccountable foundation worker. Yet nothing

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could be further from the truth. Integration into the non-profit sector has thus far touched only the program staff of foundations, leaving the board of directors well shielded.

As foundations have recruited more from non-profit organizations, they have also begun the practice of promoting staff from within and defining foundation work as a legitimate permanent career. The idea of a career in philanthropy is problematic from at least one perspective. Instead of well-rounded generalists judging the merits of grant proposals during brief stints in foundation work, philanthropy is now filled with ambitious staff members concerned with their own advancement who see grantmaking as their calling. In this sense, professionalization has introduced new motives into philanthropy—namely, looking after one's own career—that have sometimes made the support of controversial projects more difficult.

The reform and reinvention of philanthropy has had genuine costs. All the complex administrative structures erected over the past two decades have often led to a stifling conformity that has interfered with private philanthropy's pursuing its original and still central mission—to help provide risky and creative solutions to society's changing problems. It is therefore difficult to escape the conclusion that private foundations have failed dramatically over the past twenty-five years to take full advantage of their tremendous resources and independence.

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Black Hole

VIVIAN SHIPLEY

Was your mind vacant like Harlan County mine shafts
or dark as the lake in Mammoth Cave when the tour guide
turned off the light? I grabbed for you, Uncle, but you leaned
back in the boat's seat. Your silence taunts me; I cannot let go

of the quarrel you would not have last summer when I blurted
out that I could not help it that you never had a child, that I was
not a boy. Showing how much science I had learned anyway,
I gave you a lecture about black holes that were really just

the opposite of a hole because they were a dense clump of mass
in outer space with a gravitational force so strong that stars,
meteors, gas clouds and even light were sucked in. That's why
the clump was called black, why scientists couldn't see one.

You were inspecting the top you'd whittled, but I continued
right on hoping to startle you with a list of statistics, how
the hole might contain a mass of well over two billion suns,
that Albert Einstein had predicted them in 1915 but only now

with the Hubble Space Telescope could the whirlpool of stars
be spotted as they were snuffed out. I thought I'd caught your eye,
reassured you with, "Don't worry, there's no chance Earth will be
vacuumed up. That huge black hole is still too far away." Not even

waiting to hear my grand finale, how the only way to escape from
a black hole was to travel faster than the speed of light, you jumped
up, called out to Uncle Paul just in from the back field, that finally
you could always pick out Queenie's hunting mouth from her treed

mouth. When you slumped gray faced over the tractor, you made
no sound, left no word for me resting on the tip of your tongue like
communion cubes before the preacher gives the congregation a signal
to swallow the bread, transformed by the need for love into flesh.

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Transatlantic Twins

Rudyard Kipling and Owen Wister

J. C. FURNAS

My title is faulty. Twins are born on the same day, in the same place; whereas Owen Wister (1860–1938) was born in America, and Rudyard Kipling (1865–1935) was born in India. The younger man was precocious, however, and more than drew ahead. At age seventeen he was a reporter-subeditor on Anglophone newspapers in India; Wister was then still a Harvard undergraduate. And within four years Kipling's *Plain Tales from the Hills,* a collection of the India-background stories that his papers had been running, exploded him into international renown. Not until age thirty-one did Wister, a miscast Philadelphia lawyer, set foot on the ladder of fame with "Hank's Woman," a maiden short story set in the cattle-country West that *Harper's Magazine* snapped up in 1891.

He wrote that story in admiring emulation of the astringency and taut pacing of *Plain Tales.* This is no tenuous deduction from "internal evidence." He avowed his discipleship and its purpose—to apply Kipling's methods to "save the sage-brush for American literature before [it goes] the way of the California Forty-Niner." Of his stories following on "Hank's Woman" the New York *Tribune* soon remarked that they did "for the Far West very much what Mr. Kipling did for the Far East." Then ten years' worth of more such earned Wister his own explosion—*The Virginian,* an episodic novel embedding some of them in a worldwide best-seller credited with creating the Nature's Nobleman-cowboy archetype. Its success, however, meant a lopsided anomaly: some of "The American Kipling"'s best work is in *The Virginian;* but the bulk of his best remains in the several score neglected shorts and long shorts that preceded and followed it. And most of them show stronger evidence of the twinship congruence with Kipling.

Harper's may have sensed the link with Kipling. Possibly hoping to blend interest in the West with Kipling's persistent stardom, they invited him to go out there and write about it. Maybe because he already disliked almost everything about America, Kipling said no. So *Harper's,* already associating Wister with the great open spaces, made him second string and sent him prowling Texas, Arizona, California, the Pacific Northwest, as well as the Wyoming-Montana region he knew. Whether he knew of this editorial gambit I know not. He might have got it from Kipling, for in a few years the relation between the two went—symbolically, if you like—well toward twinship.

They first met in 1895 as guests of Theodore Roosevelt, a close college friend of Wister's. Finding themselves on the same train homeward bound, model and disciple not only swapped cordial shoptalk but found they shared attitudes and social-moral values then lively on both sides of the water and recognizable now. Though they were both primarily entertainers, their separate popularity made contributions—Kipling's weightier and more integrated, yet Wister's substantial—to their world's acceptance of notions that both cherished.

Many are aware of Kipling as jingoistic Bard of Empire plus *Kim,* yes, Mowgli, Mandalay, and so forth. All that today saves Wister from

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"Owen who?" outside bookish circles is his addition to our stock of clichés: "When you call me that, *smile!*" And few employing it could place its provenance—the frowsy Western barroom where there was a sudden icy silence as a cardplayer laid his gun on the table and thus challenged the dealer for calling him a son of a bitch. The confrontation was no fiction. Tenderfoot Wister was there gathering material for *Harper's* and gratefully seized on line and situation—only the locale was decaying Tombstone, Arizona, not *The Virginian*'s Medicine Bow, Wyoming.

Career twinship did not mean identical twinship. Cultural backgrounds contrasted as sharply as physiques. Kipling was stubby and broodily spectacled; Wister a rampant six-footer. Kipling's people were cultivated British of modest means. Wister's parents were an eminent Philadelphia doctor of affluent Quaker stock and a queenly harsh daughter of Fanny Kemble Butler, meteoric English actress-writer-anti-slaveryist and Pierce Butler, wastrel heir of a fortune founded by an expatriate British army major who became a signer of the U.S. Constitution. Young Kipling's school was an upstart imitation of England's "public schools" for upper-class boys. When Robert Louis Stevenson read *Plain Tales*, he said that to have endowed Kipling so richly with talent the fairies must have been drunk at the christening. In other terms, that would apply to Wister. Early schooling abroad gave him fluency in French and German. His secondary school was St. Paul's, a Yankee attempt to give patrician American youth what Eton and Harrow gave its British cousins. At Harvard Wister's prime social connections and confident charm got him into Porcellian, the ranking undergraduate "final" club. Though not averse to chimes at midnight, and doing music and lyrics for undergraduate musical shows, he also managed to graduate summa cum laude. His chosen place to study was the Porcellian's library because it was so little frequented.

Music bulked large for Wister. Grandmother Fanny's semi-pro drawing-room contralto was much in demand. The one good thing about Pierce Butler was his semi-pro skill on the flute. Great-aunt Adelaide Kemble had been a highly regarded grand opera star. His mother was so music-minded that Wister studded schoolboy letters to her with snatches of melody. College courses in harmony and counterpoint moved him to plan somehow to make music a principal part of his life. Franz Liszt, Great-aunt Adelaide's musical mentor, said one of the boy's compositions showed "un talent prononcé." Teachers at the Paris Conservatoire agreed so generously that, raising his sights, he seriously determined to go professional. His father, however, thought music as a career unbecomingly risky, socially as well as economically. Only a budding Beethoven had any business trying it. No, the boy should go to law school after a year or so in business of some sort. To make a tolerable figure in law, Dr. Wister felt, took no genius. Among Philadelphia's best people were numbers of quite mediocre lawyers.

Their moral wrestling match was a credit to them both. Father eventually gave in, only to find that his firm but affectionate nay-saying had persuaded his son that father knew best. Family connections found Wister a neophyte clerkship in an august Boston bank.

Inevitably boredom set in, relieved inadequately by the newly founded Tavern Club of which William Dean Howells—a family connection—was first president. Writing was the boy's inheritance second only to music. Grandmother Fanny's memoirs had been ornaments of Howells's *Atlantic Monthly*; and her scathing book on slavery as she had seen it on the Butler plantation had been a sensation. Great-aunt Adelaide was a graceful published writer. So was Wister's mother, who published in the *Atlantic*. Wister's undergraduate verses on Beethoven had made the *Atlantic*. Mark Twain praised his *Lampoon* parody of *The Swiss Family Robinson*. To alleviate smothering in the bank, Wister (and a clever cousin) wrote a novel. Although Howells commended it, he said that "a whole figtree wouldn't cover its chief woman character" and that it was generally too juicy to be published by American authors. Now, had the authors been French or Russian . . . (Wister, who had wit, said Howells, "kept one timid eye on Mrs. Grundy" while trying "to see life steadily and see it whole" with the other.)

Had Dr. Wister inadvertently cast his son as guinea pig in a demonstration of psychosomatics? A breakdown, physical and emotional, was plainly coming on. "Shrink" was not yet a household word. But the Northeastern quadrant's patricians had a therapy on hand. It was

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almost fashionable for delicate or unruly well-born youth to be shipped two thousand miles westward for intensive exposure to horses, cattle, furry, winged, or scaly fauna and high-altitude atmosphere instead of the effete urban kind. It was part of the nineteenth-century cult of what might be called dislocation medicine: "mountain air" for lung trouble, "change of air" for more cryptic ailments. Young Theodore Roosevelt had taken this kind of cure when almost prostrated by the death of his beloved young wife. He came back bursting with energy and wrote for the *Century* magazine vivid articles about Western roughing, it illustrated by the rising young Frederic Remington. This generalized ranch-as-therapy could have had for a brand Rx. Philadelphia's Dr. S. Weir Mitchell, an early American psychiatrist, soon himself a noted novelist—and, of course, a close connection of the Wisters'—prescribed it for the young banker.

Other family connections recommended a Wyoming rancher, Major Frank Olcott, who was prepared to harbor a shaky young patrician. Thus the unfrocked musician went West for distinctly non-Greeleyish reasons. He eventually returned fit enough for Harvard Law School, then for a proper Philadelphia law firm. But for the rest of his life Wister was plagued by feverish spells, sometimes lasting for months, that not even so renowned a doctor as Sir William Osler could fathom. The best treatment was again to pack up boots, fishing rod, and rifle for stays, sometimes exceeding a year, out where, though buffalo no longer roamed much, beef on the hoof, cowhands, rattlesnakes, rustlers, antelope, Indians, and the U.S. Cavalry were still at large.

The prescription immediately enchanted the patient. Time and again, privately or for print, Wister sang "this glorious, this supernatural atmosphere . . . great still air, pure as water and strong as wine . . . a world of crystal light, a space across which Adam and Eve might come straight from Eden," but also with a foreground littered with rusting sardine cans. Greedily he noted these settlements like disintegrating road-company scenery, their several kinds of freewheeling young centaurs mixed with "motley blackguards" affording "a continuous state of concentrated amusement and interest." He projected a supplement to Roosevelt's articles to be called *The Adventures of a Poor Shot* or *The Tenderfoot.* Then the Kipling stimulus diverted him into "the only thing that has always outlived fact—fiction."

Yet for his fictions about his sagebrush paradise, Wister promised himself—and often managed to strike—a historian's view. The results make one wish that history was often as deftly firsthanded as that ten-year crop of stories blended into that loose-limbed, easy-spoken novel *The Virginian,* which Henry James called "a rare and remarkable feat . . . clearly and remarkably felt."

The episodes in *The Virginian* that develop the hero's wooing of the Yankee schoolteacher heroine—also a Western archetype—are well enough done in the brittle terms of their time, but they owe little to the Kipling discipleship. The action episodes derived from pre-existing short stories are the ones that stick in the mind of the reader, like their Kipling siblings—*Plain Tales*—of which Lionel Trilling soundly wrote: " . . . no matter how one judges them, one never forgets the least of them." One reason for this also being true of Wister's stories is that they are rich in toothsome characters: Lin McLean, "sagebrush bigamist"; Specimen Jones, cowpuncher-trooper and impromptu politician; Scipio LeMoyne from "Gallipolice," Ohio, who held up the shell-game artist and never regretted it; Uncle Pasco, the footloose con man who held up Scipio for the payroll; "Strawberries," the British remittance man who might have made a good cowhand. All are siblings, if not in the same walks of life, of Kipling's Strickland, Daniel Dravot, and Bah-Jove Judson. The nimble dialogue, lean stage business, and easy verbal shapes are done just as Kipling would have done them had he been American. The one difference is a gain for Wister, who seldom fell into Kipling's knowingness, the irritating reporter's smatterings of occupational jargon and social shibboleths.

Westerners fault Wister for scamping the details of corral, round-up, and bunkhouse. His defense, had he bothered to make one, could have been that Roosevelt, immersed for several years in daily ranching chores, covered all that as well as an outsider could; while he, Wister, as Tenderfoot storyteller, could retain a first-person eye for people, places, and things—not the first-person of Huckleberry Finn or Barry Lyndon, but the outsider-midwife laying out circumstances conversationally,

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then with interpolated comment, questions, and described body-language maneuvering one or more characters into how it happened. This method strongly enhances the reader's sense of immediacy. In *Plain Tales* Kipling had the hang of it, then reveled in it in *Three Soldiers.* As to skillful handling of it, there is little choice between the reader's closeness to the Virginian reproaching Uncle Hughey with having courted Cattle Kate—"only she got hung"—and Mulvaney and Learoyd under the smothering heat of the brickwork arch at Fort Amara.

The wealth of minor parallels that the two young yarn spinners shared was like small stitches uniting kindred fabrics. Henry James was Kipling's best man? Well, he was also a devotee of Wister's grandmother and mother. Each modeled stories on Jamesian lines: "In the Coin of Her Life" (Wister) and "They" (Kipling). Both dabbled in the supernatural: the pretentious "Love Fountain" (Wister) and "The Brushwood Boy" (Kipling). Both satirized popular agitation: "The Village that Voted the Earth Was Flat" (Kipling) and "How Doth the Little Spelling-Bee?" (Wister). Both liked swung-from-the-floor practical jokes: Wister's "Absalom and Molting Pelican" is average Kipling; so is the bureaucratic slow torture of Kipling's "Pig." Both could anthropomorphize animals without going sticky: Wister's "Emily," the androgynous hen, and, of course, Kipling's *The Jungle Book,* while the unsavory cayuse of "The Walking Delegate" expressed Kipling's views of both Americans and glib radicalisms even more caustically than his verses or reporting pieces could.

The twins agreed further in taking professional soldiering very big. *Stalky & Co.*'s schoolboys scorned many classmates "cramming" for the army, but the last chapter about the "old boys" returning to the old school as commissioned officers is high-proof hero worship. In India young Kipling saw much of the military, hence *Soldiers Three* and "The Man Who Was" trembling before the White Hussars' Russian guest. Whether Kipling saw many, if any, of the firefights chronic in India's frequent border skirmishes is a question. But Kipling's few smell-of-powder stories employ very ably what may be secondhand data. A very eminent war correspondent once assured me that "The Drums of the Fore and Aft" is sound work. Kipling's long suit, however, was personal interaction in garrison life: Barrack-room frictions and cabals; veteran non-coms and privates coming to terms with green young officers fresh from "home" and vice versa; the edgy gap between a staid London writer and the young subalterns of "A Conference of the Powers"; little marksman Ortheris's long-range shot killing the native deserter as coda of Learoyd's story of how he came to enlist; and much genuine if nowadays outmoded macho fun: drunken Mulvaney kidnapped into impersonating a god at a native princesses' festival; or, sober, gentling the temperamental elephant blocking a whole army corps in a narrow mountain pass. Just as successfully, the *Barrack-Room Ballads* hang Danny Deever, celebrate the rogue sergeant's marriage to a whore, and warn supercilious people "at home" that single men in barracks do not turn into plaster saints. Kipling's handling of the Indian army, said George Orwell, was "a vivid and not seriously misleading picture of the old pre-machine-gun army."

Certain women in the "married quarters" were no saints either. The non-com's daughter, better acquainted than was wise with Mulvaney, a self-confessed devil with women, tries to break up his marriage-to-be. The veteran madam who finds her former soldier-lover dying of syphilis chews him out with vitriolic energy, embraces him in death, and shoots herself. Yet women were then rather peripheral to soldiering. Kipling's women come into their own in the civilian atmosphere of Simla, the mountain resort of *Plain Tales,* where high-echelon Britons sent their families and, when possible, themselves, to escape the torrid lowland summer. One of Kipling's most notable women, Mrs. Hauksbee, was queen bee of this hive of razor-edged gossip that, for all its dirty-trick feuds, playing with adulterous fire, and caste-mindedness is no tut-tutting exposé—just highly entertaining reading.

This was the Kipling of "I learned about women from 'er," the more-than-deadliness of females and the subcutaneous resemblances of the Colonel's lady and Judy O'Grady. Wister's equally tolerant misogyny owed much to the Western army posts where, consistently welcomed, he encountered not just soldiering of the Geronimo era but also clustered wives and offspring of officers—a miniature counterpart of women-skewed Simla. The repercus-

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sions of the U.S. Cavalry's ladies on the hero of "Captain Quid" suggest that Wister was a Kiplingite devotee of Miss Austen and the "Janeites." A side exhibit is the readiness of a young lieutenant's Indian inamorata to gather the intelligence that bloodily thwarts her racial brothers' attack on the stagecoach. The ladies of a small Texan town are so straitlaced that instead of "boar" one must say "male pig" in their presence. One of them proves to have been enjoying herself as secret stock-in-trade of the local black pimp who meets the trains at the station to fix her up with traveling salesmen. The most serious consequence is her husband's killing the pimp. "Well," says the go-between hotel clerk, "niggers don't count in this section."

Feminist candidates for M.A.'s might base dissertations on Wister's women. The Virginian's Yankee schoolteacher could provide only a scholarly page or so on establishment sexism. But for livelier fuel take Professor Salamanca of Texas—Wister disliked Texas almost as heartily as Kipling did America—a sinister bitch-despot poisoning a whole county with the side effects of superstition: She is a political landgrab manipulator; lethally discards a succession of young bedfellows, keeps a stuffed alligator for familiar spirit, and harbors an uncanny buckskin pony off whose back she is finally lynched for rubbing out the decent local leader who dares resist her. (The pony ends up a polo mount in the effete East.)

Another hard-bitten woman blends with soldiering in Wister's Wyoming hellhole, Drybone, a long-abandoned cavalry post. As a father reminds The Virginian, it is "no place for young children." Its degenerating buildings have long been infested by squatters of both sexes, quarreling, gambling, whoring, barkeeping. The only legitimate institution is the derelict graveyard where the U.S. Cavalry used to bury its dead. Its name-and-rank wooden headboards, weathered into illegibility, are recycled for victims of the local goings-on. Here Lin McLean's rowdy ex-spouse, a sort of vicious Wife of Bath, worn down by fun and games, takes refuge in six ounces of laudanum. The dance hall's fiddler keeps "Buffalo Gals" bouncing while tipsy revelers monitor the effort to save her life by relentlessly walking her, half-dragged on half-paralyzed legs, up and down, up and down. No use—her insistently raspy breathing stops, and there she is, over-plumply dead in all her pink-ribboned finery.

Sunrise floods Drybone with light. Most of the girls and boys are splashing naked in the river, but some are not quite too drunk to borrow a rotting coffin from the graveyard, and for a hearse they drag out and bedizen the rickety ambulance that the cavalry left behind. A mourner falls into the grave and is hauled out. A prayer is suggested. "Now I lay me" is rejected. Somebody unearths a battered prayer book, probably an army chaplain's, but they can't find the burial service. So they sing "Bang the drum slowly" and on some long-dead trooper's headboard scrawl a woman's name that the boys, gratefully mindful of past favors, briefly eulogize.

Told with surefooted informality, it could be something drafted by William Faulkner, rewritten by Damon Runyon. At least it is Wister's best variation on Kipling's alarmist view of women. But there were others close on target: In "Salvation Gap," Wister's only story set in an active mining camp, the popular proprietress of the dance hall-cum-upstairs—"such a robust songstress, so tireless a dancer"—has an obsessive, middle-aged admirer on whom, just for the hell of it, she plays a prank that humiliates him. He cuts her throat. In spite of the sheriff's perfunctory opposition, her current clandestine favorite, a stagecoach shotgun rider, is lynched for it. The actual killer, morally agonized, owns up just too late. But adrenalin has had time to ebb. The camp can't bring itself to string him up too. "It ought to be done," says one. "But gosh, how can a man fire his gun right after it's been discharged?" The killer stabs himself with the knife he used on her. In "The Serenade at Siskiyou" (northern California), the judge's wife has formed a Ladies' Reform and Literary Lyceum. Two local youths hold up a stagecoach and kill the popular driver. One of the youths is caught. The judge properly talks the citizenry out of lynching him. But when the other youth is found and jailed, Mrs. Judge infects her clubmates with such demonstrative sympathy for the misguided lads that Siskiyou's disgusted men lynch the pair of them.

Wister's preface says it was a Wells Fargo official who told him the germ of the Siskiyou story. Wister calls it "an irregular but highly

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wholesome way of dealing with crime." The collection containing it drew warm applause from Kipling, who evidently did not feel for Judge Lynch his repugnance for other American folkways.

That sideswipe at the women's club movement of a century ago need not distract from the frequent presence of the Judge. Nowadays "lynch" is a shocker that gives even five-letter words a bad name. Back then, however, many had for the Judge tolerance ranging from looking the other way to wallowing in his foulest attributes. Wister hovered in between, sympathetic to one instance, making distinctions about another. Major Olcott, his early host, was later a ringleader in the lynch-minded "Johnson County War" of Wyoming's cattlemen on rustlers and "nesters" allegedly supporting them. Wister explicitly approved of their actions. Molly Stark's engagement to The Virginian almost founders because he has dutifully led a necktie party for horse thieves, including his former best friend, Steve. The finest thing in *The Virginian* is the segment in which the Tenderfoot and the hero have cause gradually to suspect that unaccountable boot tracks and hoofprints showing just ahead of them on their mountain trail mean somehow that Steve and his partner, whom they left hanging from a cottonwood limb the morning before, are haunting their progress and will show up round the next bend. This was Teddy Roosevelt's favorite episode; even when presidentially busy, he had time to read Wister and comment at length, often astutely, on what he had read.

The Virginian's employer, Judge Henry of Sunk Creek ranch, works persuasively on Molly with the best that can be said for taking the law into one's own hands: Rustler lynching is the pis aller when corrupt or weak government fails to maintain the reign of law. In the Deep South of *Lady Baltimore*, Wister does blisteringly distinguish between Wyoming ranchers' and San Francisco vigilantes' proceedings, usually semi-private, and Dixie's courthouse square's mass-attended festival of lurid race hatred with bits of the charred remains handed round as souvenirs. Wister's "My Country, 1899," his poem for Harvard's Phi Beta Kappa that year, further denounces "men roasted at the stake," and two of his best stories handle the problem of the Wrong Man in a fashion appealing to people who are against any form of capital punishment. "Salvation Gap," as with "My Country, 1899" above, is merely anecdotal. "The Gift Horse" is fifteen thousand words of the Tenderfoot in top form.

Innocently proud of becoming less of a tenderfoot, he sets off alone on a good sorrel horse lent him by a minor rancher for whom he did a favor. His goal is a hard-to-find beauty spot: Still Hunt Spring, somewhere off thataway. His friend, venerable Chief Washaki, has drawn him an Indian-style landmark-diagram map. Late in the afternoon he notices that the sorrel's gait is quickening as though he is on a familiar bearing. Sure enough, soon there it is, but only if you know where to look when—a lovely, narrow, deep, lush-green cleft watered by the spring, now a corral for a couple of dozen horses fenced in by a brush barrier across the only entrance.

Pleased with his self-reliant success, he camps and turns in. He wakes well after sunrise to find one of Wyoming's most noted cattlemen holding a rifle on him. All those horses are stolen. So is the grateful rancher's sorrel; pity he never asked where the Tenderfoot was off to. Neither the noted cattleman nor his half-dozen comrades see any reason not to lynch the Tenderfoot right away as obviously one of the gang. He protests that he is a guiltless sightseer. How did he manage to find the place? With Washaki's map. Let's see it. I lit my fire with it last night. The casual insolence and the we're-in-a-hurry-to-get-back way they brush off everything he says are most chillingly conveyed. Fantastic as it is, there is nothing, really nothing that can be done about his plight.

Forty years later Walter van Tilburg Clark's *The Ox-Bow Incident* employed the Wrong Man motif and deservedly made the popular reading lists. But in my view it cannot vie with "The Gift Horse." Clark's writing is conscientious but clumpy. And the three Wrong Men, minor characters making their entrance well along, get hanged to the eventual dismay of a few. Whereas Wister's Tenderfoot is with the reader all the way, an articulate nervous system conveying from within both the Wrong Man's horror and, as observer, how a certain kind of egocentric can rather relish having the law in his own hands.

The twinship shared by Wister and Kipling admits small inconsistencies. Kipling loved

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that shiny macho-mechanical toy, the early automobile. For Wister it was an ostentatious vulgarism; the brassy, sirenish anti-heroine of *Lady Baltimore* has one that runs over the "quality" heroine's beloved dog. Wister thought highly of the U.S. Cavalry. Kipling observed them in Yellowstone Park and, as self-qualified expert on soldiering, thought them a sort of legalized group of guerrillas. Wister's military stuff involved principally officers; Kipling rather specialized in rank and file. But Wister was no consistent sympathizer with authority. He was against censorship. "Kansas," he wrote in "Captain Quid," "knows you are in danger of hell fire if you like something she doesn't happen to." Wister was also disgusted when Uncle Sam penalized Maxim Gorky for traveling with a lady who was not his wife. Nor were Wister's politics rock-ribbed Republican. He applauded Grover Cleveland for refusing to gobble up Hawaii when its resident filibusters gave him a chance. Newport's show-off "cottages" and manners nauseated him. He put his mouth where his principles were to run on a reform ticket for Philadelphia's city council in a hopelessly machine-corrupt district.

Though Wister thought William Jennings Bryan absurd, he saw the man's popularity as "growing protest against the interlocking directorates of Big Business and Government." His distaste for Washington's Big Government was so strong that he predicted it would collapse within fifty years—a prediction in which Teddy Roosevelt and Henry Cabot Lodge concurred. Nevertheless, Wister's emotional substratum had the same chronic elitist flavor as Kipling's description of how, whenever God passes by, the souls of British-style sahibs, take-charge salt of the earth—like Cecil Rhodes, say—are privileged merely to "rise to their feet—gentlemen unafraid." Wister's formula was simpler, a southernism possibly acquired in his boyhood when visiting his aunt's Georgia plantation: "America is divided into two classes, the quality—and the equality." Quality? Yes, such as the austere, archaic but gracious patrician ladies of Charleston with whom he ornamented *Lady Baltimore.*

Such terms readily fester into racism. One of Wister's occasional disagreements with Roosevelt came when he appointed a well-qualified black Collector of Customs at Charleston. The unreconstructed Charleston ladies found it outrageous to set a black man over the Custom House's white functionaries. When Roosevelt made more headlines by inviting Booker T. Washington to lunch, the feisty little heroine of *Lady Baltimore* called it disgusting thus to befoul the White House, locus of the national social consensus.

Then racism aggravates xenophobia, that ingrained human failing. Those explaining away Kipling's "white man's burden" must ignore his contempt for Mowgli's Bandar-log in general. Wister wrote Henry Morgenthau off as "A Jew . . . that's what seems to matter" and defended Harvard's admissions quota for Jews. *The Virginian* plays up glib, crass Jewish traveling salesmen. That sort of thing is less strident nowadays, except among militant blacks. But to meet it in the published works and private letters of cultivated and well-meaning people is a still-valuable reminder that a hundred years ago it was normal, acceptable conversational small change, like the heat and the humidity.

In Wister's "A Kinsman of Red Cloud," a "mongrel strain" makes a half-breed Indian murderer succumb to babbling panic when his uncle, Chief Red Cloud, confronts him. Wister took seriously such "quality" chiefs as Red Cloud, who sternly turns his nephew over to white law. At age sixty, Wister wrote: "The blackest page in our history is our treatment of the Indian . . . when [army officers] were ordered out to kill [the Indian] they knew that he had struck in self defense and was the real victim." But he showed no signs of modifying his judgment that trying to shape young Indians into white men's behavior, as at the Carlisle school, was futile. In wider terms he was viscerally sure that, by and large, blacks, Jews, Mexicans, and the run of recently arrived steerage immigrants were, one way or another, inferior to "the quality." He was a vice-president of the Immigration Restriction League and reminded Roosevelt that in their day at Cambridge "Ellis Island had not yet diluted Harvard."

Prosecution of Wister for aggravated assault on the progressive trend of his day would have had supplementary evidence. He disliked Eliot's "elective system" at Harvard because students were likely to abuse it. He had no use for organized labor. He opposed a Nobel Prize for Upton Sinclair. He shared Roosevelt's distaste for Woodrow Wilson and thought the other Roosevelt as repugnant as

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Al Smith and Herbert Hoover. Bundle in those previous counts of misogyny, xenophobia, and racism, and no jury would have needed to leave the courtroom to issue a verdict.

By 1928, interest in the body of Wister's work, not just *The Virginian*, was still high enough for his publisher to issue an eight-volume *Writings of Owen Wister*. But that was so long ago that its pages there on my shelves tend to shatter when fingered. Since then his scores of short stories have been pretty much "one with [Kipling's] Nineveh and Tyre." Some of that neglect may be owing to the current political correctness, which trains potential readers to reject anything containing offensive attitudes, no matter what its literary quality. The roots of that, however, may go further back to accustoming the student young to regard literature as primarily raw material for research and intensive interpretation, ignoring, even mistrusting, its chief purpose—to entertain.

In 1985 the Southern Methodist University Press overlooked Wister's Texaphobia and issued a competent biography. Last year the University of Nebraska Press reprinted *The Virginian* with an introduction patronizing it as a sprightly fossil, indeed "a pidgin masterpiece," whatever that means, but nothing about the knack with short stories that made buoyant style available. None of this promises a revival. Ask some large library's computer to blow the dust off *When West Was West* (Teddy Roosevelt's title for the collection, by the way), "At the Sign of the Last Chance." Nothing here hazardous to your moral health. Just dreamily paced, late-night palaver among old-timers and the Tenderfoot, and a flawless climax.

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Reflections of a Bookstore Type

PETER SCHWENDENER

In 1936, George Orwell wrote an essay entitled "Bookshop Memories," which was a bitter account of a job he had held in a used bookstore. The thing he seems to have disliked the most was the clientele, who he arranged in a kind of hierarchy of loathsomeness. At the top are "unmistakable paranoiacs," also described as "not quite certifiable lunatics." Below are "the decayed person smelling of old breadcrusts," customers who order books without intending to purchase them, "the dear old lady who 'wants a book for an invalid,'" the customer who wants a certain book but knows nothing about it other than that it is red, and on and on, until one realizes that what Orwell hated was waiting on people, period. Anyone who has worked in a bookstore, new or used, large or small, will recognize the reality of what he is talking about.

I have been working for about nine months in a large bookstore in Evanston, Illinois, a Barnes & Noble superstore, to be exact. Although I have not researched the topic, I am aware that the superstore concept is still somewhat avant-garde, at least as far as traditionally small businesses such as bookstores are concerned. Our store is extremely large, easily as large as a supermarket, and it intimidated me the first time I laid eyes on it. It takes up two stories of a large building in the middle of downtown Evanston and is probably as much a microcosm of the town as a store could be. It is very far from the bookshop Orwell describes, yet much of what Orwell writes fits it exactly.

According to Orwell, "a bookseller lives on his windows"; my store is window-dominated, and looks like an oasis of leisure and enjoyment, especially at night. Orwell calls bookselling "a humane trade which is not capable of being vulgarized beyond a certain point." True: my store sells pornography, self-help books, books on how to "write that novel," stupid and possibly even degrading children's books, and yet these books, or rather these book-shaped objects ("things in book's clothing," as Charles Lamb calls them) do not give the store its tone. The tone is given by the unbought, rarely browsed complete set of Trollope's novels, the surprisingly large philosophy section, and other parts of the store that are bad economic risks, though perhaps less so than they would be in a non-college town. As long as only a few adult books, in the pre-1970s meaning of the word *adult*, are on the premises, the vulgarization to which Orwell refers cannot take hold.

The position I hold, along with several other people, is that of "bookseller," which means "sales clerk." I walk around the store, making myself a moving target for customers with vague requests, take turns running one of the six cash registers (Orwell would be amazed at the size of our operation), station myself at the always-busy information desk, or engage in the activity known to all booksellers as "reshelve," as in (spoken by a supervisor), "There's a pile of reshelve over in Self-Help. Could you take care of it?" Easily the worst thing about the job is reshelving the books and magazines that customers have looked at and abandoned miles away from where they belong. Yet even with "reshelve" (the word is both a verb and a noun) one notices interesting things.

Savage browsing occurs in the Travel sec-

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tion, where customers, sick of living where they live, rifle through seven or eight books on Colorado or Guam and leave them in piles. The one section I don't know much about is Children's, which is anachronistically taken care of by female booksellers, all of whom, even more anachronistically, seem to enjoy it, at least as much as anyone can enjoy a low-paying job. Some sections are never messed up by customers: Theater and Drama, consisting mostly of plays and books about acting and directing, attracts almost no one, probably because actors, in common with most performing artists, don't enjoy reading, and directing and acting are the last things one learns to do by reading books. Other sections that are chronically unvisited, kept on the premises merely to bolster our claim to have everything, are Linguistics and, I fear, Poetry, though we have a rather good poetry section.

The fact that "reshelve" is the worst thing about the job says something—namely, that it is far from a bad job. The conventional wisdom, in fact, is that as far as retail work goes, working in a bookstore is as good as it gets. The job depresses me, when it does, simply because it pays barely enough to live on, but I can suffer that, for now at least.

There is a bookstore type, and I am afraid I am of that type. I like being around books, even crappy ones, I'm not physically threatening, and waiting on customers doesn't upset me as much as it seems to have upset Orwell. The job asks almost nothing of me other than that I be there on time. What is more, the management does not mind if one browses as one works, as long as blatant loafing is avoided. One learns the difference between improving one's product knowledge and lounging at the information desk with a cup of coffee and a huge art book.

Our store has a problem with security. There is, I am told, a fair amount of theft, or attempted theft, and yet the store has its hands tied as far as cracking down is concerned. A bookstore's primary association is with friendliness and leisure, and the presence of armed security guards, or security guards period, does not conduce to either. A small, I thought rather fierce-looking, man who didn't carry a gun was sent by one security agency, but he was eventually let go because the management didn't think he looked formidable enough. He was succeeded by two uniformed men with huge revolvers at their sides, as if they were prepared for Scorcese-like carnage in the Self-Help section. They are gone now, and a large individual without visible weaponry makes himself conspicuous among the shelves. Books are, unfortunately for us, not a bad thing to steal: a pile of fresh best-sellers, or new paperbacks, are apparently easy to unload. Many books are attractive, and I can see someone with no interest in reading stealing a pile just because of the way they look.

One thing taboo in bookselling is to let customers know what you think of their purchases. The problem arises occasionally at the cash register. For the most part, maintaining impassive features in the face of curious (or worse) purchases is not hard. Once, someone materialized at the register with three self-help books and a magazine. The books all had gentle titles like *Managing Your Anger* or *Towards Serenity*, and the magazine was *Modern Handgun*. The sale went off without the hint of a grimace on my part. A well-known Chicago painter came in one evening with a female companion and bought her a book entitled *How to Write Erotica*. An older woman who seemed at, or near, the verge of mental collapse bought the complete, or near-complete works of the poet John Ashbery (did she know what she was doing?). There is a book among our stock entitled *Subway Art* that is basically a how-to for graffiti artists. Occasionally a distracted youth asks for it, but it is never on hand because, as soon as we order it, it is immediately stolen. One evening a worried-looking mother and her leather-jacketed teenage son came to the register with two or three books on punk rock, one I believe a biography of the singer Johnny Rotten. The weary mother, breaking out her checkbook, could not forbear to ask her son, "Are you *sure* this was approved as a project?" "I don't care if it was or not," the boy said with surprising hatred, or something near it. "You'll reimburse me when we get home," she said, handing me the check.

Books are not exactly luxuries, but neither are they necessities. They are inveterately connected, as even Orwell seems to grasp, with pleasure. There is something gratuitous about them, even the ones that look drenched in boring or forbidding practicality such as electronics manuals and used-car price guides (we

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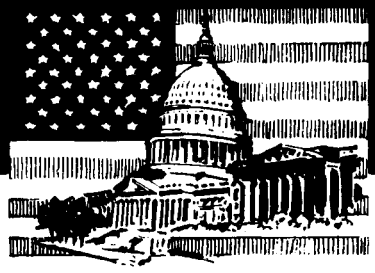

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sell both). People are off their guard in a bookstore as they are not in a clothing or a toy store, which makes it unfair, if one is the typically overeducated bookstore employee, to make fun of what they buy.

Many of our customers take an undisguised pleasure in spending money, as if the fact that books are involved sanctifies the lack of prudence. A bearded man came into the store one night and collected a huge pile of books on the theme of self-betterment: three or four oily self-help books, a couple of neo-pagan treatises from the New Age section, and (I'm not sure what his reasoning was) two or three books on how to write fiction. It was a huge tab, but he looked extremely happy, on the verge of some kind of transformation. The next evening he reappeared to return virtually all the books. Fortunately for him, our return policy is liberal in the extreme. Just buying the books had given him a lift, maybe saved him from doing something foolish.

Orwell comments on the different buying habits of men and women. "Roughly speaking," he writes, "what one might call the *average* novel—the ordinary, good-bad, Galsworthy-and-water stuff which is the norm of the English novel—seems to exist only for women. Men read either the novels it is possible to respect, or detective stories." Today it can only safely be said that men buy magazines such as *Modern Handgun* and fishing magazines such as *Bassin'*, while women buy novels of all kinds. Best-sellers are all unisex in their audience. The real problem in updating Orwell's division of male and female purchases is the overwhelmingly large number of young people that increasingly seem to make up the book-buying public. The books, or in corporate terms the "product," has mutated, and is still mutating, to match the volatile tastes of the young.

There is a substantial category of books called "graphic novels," which are, simply, comic books that feature Batman and Superman but cost around $12.95 apiece. Their entitlement to the honorific term "novel" is gravely in doubt, but some of them are attractive, and they are taken very seriously, and not just by adolescents. Many books in the Children's section contain, on their covers or elsewhere, buzzers, tiny music boxes, bells, and other encumbrances that make them amphibious, neither book nor toy but something indeterminate (there is a small, heavily picked over section in Children's called Classics, containing *Alice in Wonderland*, A. A. Milne, and the rest). Many of the titles in Self-Help are "workbooks," as in the *Depression Workbook*, a more or less graded series of exercises (I believe the pages tear out) designed to lead the reader, or purchaser, out of his or her despair.

According to a recent article in the *New York Times*, the physical identity of books is in deep flux, with publishers experimenting with various unconventional shapes: novels, for example, that are slightly larger than cigarette packs (Douglas Coupland's short-story collection *Life After God* is an example). A number of novels pitched to young people (the so-called members of Generation X, people in their twenties) are large colorful squares, eerily reminiscent of record albums. Only mysteries and detective stories are still issued in what might be called the traditional book shape, the quiet rectangle that looks as if it is made to be actually read as opposed to merely owned or looked at.

It is now obligatory for a bookstore to contain a café, and ours contains a sizable one on the second floor. I have noticed that, while all kinds of people come into the store, not all kinds linger in the café, whose prices are fairly steep. The café is given over mostly to older people, students who seem to be actually studying, and quiet couples. The store's extreme permissiveness is apparent in its café policy. Cups of foaming coffee, donuts, butter-drenched scones, and muffins can be consumed anywhere in the store, among the opulent art books, while reading unpurchased novels, or dreaming over travel books. If I rack my brains I cannot really think of anything our customers are not, in principle, allowed to do. Generally, the policy of maintaining the store as a kind of moral free zone seems to pay off. Customers do not abuse the policy except in one area, that of the magazines. They swarm over the magazine racks on the first floor and leave their contents in shocking heaps, fashion magazines sprawling in V-shapes, computer magazines gutted for the free software they often contain, copies even of rational periodicals such as *The Economist* flipped through and thrown on the floor.

The bookstore is haunted, and even shaped, by some of the prevailing issues of the day. Chief among these is the gap, which can be

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raged at or philosophized about but not wished away, between high and low culture. Anyone who thinks that this gap is frivolous should work in a bookstore. A rather accomplished artist has been retained by Barnes & Noble to furnish its stores with large caricatures of Shakespeare (the only writer with his own section, though Virginia Woolf commands something close to her own in fiction), George Bernard Shaw, and others, as well as popular deities such as John Grisham, James Michener, and Sue Grafton. From where I sit, John Grisham is the most powerfully popular writer in America, meaning that his fans seem the most intelligently devoted; the fans of other blockbuster novelists such as Tom Clancy seem to buy his huge dreary volumes out of something like duty. Grisham is regarded by the bookselling industry as a force of nature. I have been on the floor when shipments of best-sellers have arrived, and can testify to the almost numinous power that radiates from a V-cart (a rolling device used to move two or three dozen books) full of fresh copies of a Grisham novel.

Our store has a curiously large section entitled Literary Theory that holds the works of deconstructionists, New Historicists, Reader Response Theorists, and other academic scrutinizers of texts. I don't think that this section is there simply for prestige; it is there because these books sell, and not just to academics. An utterly unpretentious woman asked me for a book on postmodernism, and she wasn't a student (I asked). It can now be said that deconstruction, though to a limited extent, is genuinely popular. We have, I think, the complete works of Paul de Man, and multiple copies of the complete works of Jacques Derrida, not to mention much of the latest scholarship connected with these and related writers. The increasingly mainstream profile of deconstruction came to mind as a possible paranoid hypothesis when I recently tried to order a book critical (though hardly dismissive) of the movement, David Lehmann's highly readable *Signs of the Times*, which offers a chronicle of the political misbehavior (among other things) of the late Paul de Man: it is unaccountably out of print.

As an ex-graduate student (surprise, surprise), I am both drawn to and depressed by the works of literary theory and I seek diversion in other sections. There is one book, in the section ambiguously designated Nature, that can always be counted on to brighten my mood after too much time in the theory section. It is a large collection of photographs entitled *Dangerous Aquatic Animals*, and it features not only pictures of killer whales, sharks, jellyfish, piranhas, and other bad actors of the sea, but photographs—not too gross, but gross enough—of the damage they have done to human beings (no decapitated scuba divers, just the anonymous swollen hands of someone who tried to embrace a toxic crustacean, etc.). The thing about the book is its dust jacket, which has been reduced to near tatters by, I like to think, myriads of ten-year-olds who have ritually gathered after school to gape at it ("Cool! Look at that guy!" "Come on, let me see it! Quit hogging it!"). Along with Woodworking perhaps, the Nature section is the most innocent in the store, a refuge from the rows of Tom Clancy novels and treatises of Derrida. I hope it doesn't sound like straining after paradox to observe how much Derrida and Clancy have in common: their books tend alike to strand the reader at some point infinitely removed from human thought and experience.

We have a very high turnover among the employees. I have been at the store longer than most of the other booksellers, and I have not been there that long. We hired a lot of part-timers to work over the Christmas holidays, and most of them were let go, some to their dismay, after the rush subsided. The store is fairly brusque in its hiring and, I fear, in its firing, policies. As with security, the matter of hiring and firing is interestingly complicated by the fact that books, meaning culture, meaning enlightenment, meaning humanism, are what we trade in. As a matter of fact, most of the employees do seem to have an unforced respect for books as more than saleable objects; otherwise they wouldn't work here. It is, however, a business, not a school or a church. The head office in New York recently sent out a Statement of Purpose that was posted in the employee lounges of Barnes & Noble stores around the country. It said that the company's ambition was to be the best retail store regardless of its product, but that because "our product happens to be books" we are obliged to make sure that our business practices "live up to the promise and idealism of the volumes that line our shelves."

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Before one starts snickering at this, it is worth noting how indissoluble the tie between books and "idealism" (however understood) is. The Barnes & Noble CEO is, in his way, giving a bland rephrasing to the belief of Matthew Arnold, I. A., Richards, and others (here I draw triumphantly on my graduate school experience) that literature, or humanistic learning, is somehow capable of saving us. This is a belief that I do not share but nonetheless respect. Now for the snickering: our stock includes, besides *How to Write Erotica*, such idealism-soaked productions as *Transactional Analysis for Toddlers, The Dark Side of Your Inner Child*, and my nominee for the most pathos-drenched of our titles, *Seven Weeks to a Settled Stomach*. The proper response to the CEO's mandate that we live up to the books we sell was made by one of my co-workers: "I'm willing, as long as the company accepts legal responsibility."

It goes without saying that no one at the store, with the exception of the boss and one or two of the assistant managers, regards it as a real job. I fell into conversation with an erudite customer one night, a retired history professor, and, without any obvious intention of offending me, he referred to working in a bookstore such as ours as a "McJob." If one presses further, into the dark heart of the average bookstore employee, one discovers that the only thing worthy of being called a job is something in, or vaguely related to, the arts. With its staggeringly large collection of art books, its substantial section devoted to Writing and Publishing, and the huge drawings of Oscar Wilde and Virginia Woolf staring down at everyone, the store itself is a kind of massive jibe at the fundamental unseriousness of everything that is not the arts. (I forgot to mention something that didn't bother me at all for the first few months but has now become maddening, the relentless twittering of classical music over the loudspeakers.) To subject oneself to such an art-saturated atmosphere once or twice a week is blissful, but to make it one's daily haunt is risking satiety. Marxist analysts of the corruption of culture under late capitalism would enjoy directing bitter commentary at the store, though they would have to step lightly around the fact that books by Marxists bitterly denouncing enterprises such as Barnes & Noble's make up the better part of our Sociology section.

Bookselling—at least at superstores such as ours that, like the gates of hell, are open almost all the time (9:00 A.M. to 11:00 P.M. every day except Christmas) and accordingly need a large staff—is the ideal job for people who don't want to sleep in the streets but find most ways of earning money not to their liking. I fear that bookselling is for people who are somewhat work-shy. Let me revise that to people who are pathologically averse to exertion of most kinds. There is serious responsibility at our store, but it is monopolized by the managers, mostly by the general manager, a woman in our case, who has to answer to the district supervisor, and by the folks in Receiving, who undoubtedly, and justly, regard the booksellers as glorified wastrels.

Below the level of management there is not much to do. Books sell themselves. In this, books differ from most merchandise. Nonetheless, I have noticed that, despite the extreme unstrenuousness of my job, not everyone can do it. One has to be courteous to customers without inducing in oneself overmastering feelings of servility. To grovel is not the way to ingratiate yourself, and to blow up at a customer, even if he insults you (it happens, it happens) is the only sure way to be fired immediately. When a putative book buyer whom I have never seen before abruptly calls me by my first name (we wear name tags), I begin, dangerously, wondering if sleeping on the streets is as bad as it seems.

What one observes in many booksellers, myself very much included, is an interest in, yes, the arts combined with a disinclination to align oneself with the forces of hard-core bohemia, the wearers of black clothing who swarm in cafés and have earned from an acquaintance of mine the name "art nuns." I have known many bohemians, and, contrary to what some may think, they often work, but not at bookstores, which are incurably square places, really: they earn whatever money they need at copy stores, as waiters and waitresses, or as bartenders. Orwell calls bookselling "an unhealthy life," but, as low-paying work goes, it is far from life-threatening. I do not find it impossible to leave work and read for a few hours, hang out with friends, and, in short, live. I don't love the job, but that is because I find the idea of work itself a kind of antidote to desire. The bouts of shame I endure at having to wear a tie and a name tag are not inca-

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pacitating. I cannot suppress the hope that I will one day leave the store, and I feel sure that if this hope is realized it will not occasion loud weeping on my employer's part.

Jung at Heart

THE JUNG CULT. *By Richard Noll. Princeton University Press. $27.95.*

Reviewed by PAUL R. MCHUGH

The history of depth psychology and its application in psychodynamic psychotherapy is an extended variation on the story of Freud and his followers. Many tagged after him like sheep. Others such as Jung and Adler went off to form their own programs of thought and treatment and were viewed as heretics by Freud. Now that the end of the century approaches and much of the dust of controversy amongst the followers and the independents has settled, it is clear that the great protagonists of psychodynamics, Freud, Jung, Adler—like Baskin-Robbins ice cream—differ in flavor but not in essential ingredients. Which therapeutic school, if any, you prefer is mostly a matter of taste.

But, as once again demonstrated in this new book on Carl Gustav Jung by Richard Noll—a clinical psychologist and Fellow in the History of Science Department at Harvard—matters of taste can still evoke ferocious argument. Noll entitles his book *The Jung Cult.* The "cult" of Jung is, however, simply an extension of the "cult" of Freud. Jung's work derives most of its merits and demerits from its Freudian source and cannot be fairly considered in isolation from it.

Paul Roazen, the most thoughtful student of the history of Freud and his depth psychology movement, has suggested that speaking about Freud's "discoveries" tends to mislead. Roazen argues, and most now agree, that Freud's contribution to psychology should be seen in terms of proposals, influences, or even achievements, when warranted, but that the word *discovery*, with its scientific sense of breakthrough, is overwrought.

Roazen sees Freud's influence as coming from four particular contributions. First, Freud put forward a conception of the unconscious that was dynamic, drive based, and sustained separately from consciousness by repression. Second, Freud had a view of sexual development in the infant and child and proposed that this development was critical to such aspects of human mental life as the formation of our personalities. Third, Freud invented a new brand of treatment in which the imagination is set loose "on the couch" and permitted through "free" association to follow any lead. Fourth, Freud created a powerful movement of thought that attracted many articulate disciples, not least among them Carl Jung, who challenged accepted ideas and commanded attention at a time when boredom and despair with the traditions were strong.

The two points to emphasize when addressing those therapeutic workers who followed after Freud are: first, the challenge to traditions that Freud launched; and, second, Freud's recommendation that the imagination be freed to roam unchecked in search of meaning. These are the points that provoke the arguments and scandals attached to this movement of thought; they are found in all the schools of psychotherapy—those followers that remain close to Freud in his assumptions about the unconscious and childhood sexuality and those, such as Jung and Adler, who also make radical assumptions about the unconscious but see sources of crucial conflict other than sex.

Freud certainly was the leader in challenging the traditions. He proposed—more, I have come to believe, because of his commitment to Nietzschean nihilism than because of any demonstrable clinical facts—that we are, in fact, victims of our drives and of our capacity for self-deception. With this proposition, Freud taught his followers to devalue both the high claims of the Enlightenment about human nature and the strict demands placed on it by Judeo-Christian teaching. He insinuated, as did Nietzsche, that all these values rest upon shabby, indeed quite vile, foundations. Moral convictions, for example, rested, Freud

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argued, on the internalization of aggression—a view identical to Nietzsche's comment that "conscience is not, as is supposed, 'the voice of God in man'; it is the instinct of cruelty, turning in upon itself after it can no longer release itself outwardly." With a successful psychoanalysis, Freud promised those happy few, those who can acknowledge what he taught and so organize the chaos of their passions, a chance at satisfaction in life—of becoming, essentially, his version of *Übermensch.*

Richard Noll describes Jung and how his theories developed after he took up with Freud. All the Nietzschean, Darwinian, neo-romantic, irrational, pseudo-religious, indeed pagan ideas that Jung explored are given special emphasis by Noll. He argues that Jung's ideas of the collective unconscious and the archetypes derived from nineteenth-century scientific misdirections.

Although over two decades ago Henri Ellenberger in his magisterial book *The Discovery of the Unconscious* (1970) described these backgrounds to Jung's thought, Noll broods over them, gives emphasis to their dark side, and implies that they not only are central to Jung's theories but represent a serious form of decadence. He adds to his warnings by documenting how Jung was a charismatic figure who inspired followers and interpreted for them themes that ran in the fads and spirit of his times. Noll claims that, though Jung followed Freud and Nietzsche in dismissing both the assumptions of the Enlightenment and Judeo-Christian thought, he added mystery to his own teachings by drawing upon nineteenth-century occultism and Teutonic neo-paganism. Noll believes that Jung enunciated a gnostic cosmology that proved attractive to people for whom the science of the day was empty of human meaning and for whom Judeo-Christianity didn't turn the trick either. These attractions, he believes, may explain why Jung seems to be outstripping Freud in the popular imagination.

Noll's book, then, is a long philippic against Jung. He believes that Jung's sources tell much about his essence. Noll never discusses any contribution of Jung to psychotherapy or to other aspects of psychiatry, such as Jung's useful study of extraversion and introversion or his sophisticated view of dreams. Noll also decided not to feature Jung's break from the psychoanalytic orthodoxy of Freud because he believes that this has been documented many times before. The problem with his approach—especially since he aims to warn us against the "cult" of Jung and the irrationality of his ideas—is that by ignoring any contribution of Jung to psychiatry, and essentially isolating him from Freud, he presents a false history of psychodynamics.

Jung, Adler, and all the others who stick with or stray from Freud set out, like Freud, from the same primary sources. Because he minimizes the similarities amongst the depth psychologists, Noll presents his Jungian studies with a tone reminiscent of Claude Rains in *Casablanca,* who says, "I'm shocked to discover there is gambling going on here," while cheerfully pocketing his winnings. I'm shocked to tell you that Jung is Nietzschean, anti-Christian, writes in Lamarckian ways about the evolution of mental life, and cultivates the occult, Noll in effect says—all the while announcing himself as a clinical psychologist.

The best evidence of the fundamental similarity of the schools of depth psychology is found in Freud's books. In *The Future of an Illusion, Totem and Taboo,* and *Moses and Monotheism,* Freud gives Western religion the Nietzschean heave-ho. As well, he invokes an imagined "primal horde" and the slaughter of the "father" as the source of the Oedipal complex that is passed along to us by Lamarckian heredity. Finally, he engages his fascination with the Egyptian gods and occultism to smack down Moses, the prophet of the law.

Freud, Jung, and Adler have all been powerful influences on the mythologies of the twentieth century. Their efforts, like those of their intellectual father Nietzsche, are all about unveiling people's "real" intentions and producing the *Übermensch* through cultivation of a "deep" understanding of our psychological innards. By means of their own domineering personalities, they offered their followers a salvational path that looks like more fun than anything Judeo-Christianity seems to provide.

The "cult" of Jung is an extension of the "cult" of Freud, but Noll documents the Jungian way extensively—Jung's interest in Teutonic volkish themes, his social Darwinism, his neo-paganism. But all these aspects of Jung—including his tendency to justify anti-Semitism—rest on his following the implications of the method that Freud launched. Once you accept Freud's claim that you can tap uncon-

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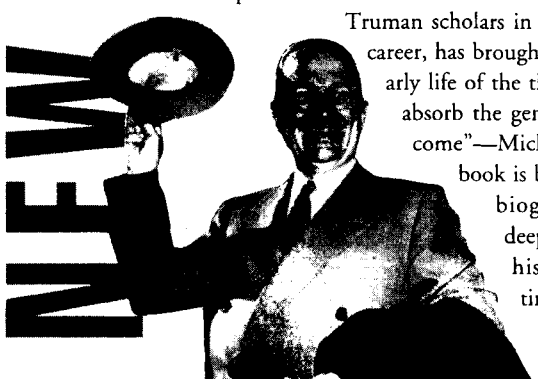

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scious material by freeing the imagination, you have to accept what imagination delivers. You may be repelled by what others claim to find in their unconscious, but if, like Freud, you believe they should follow that bewitching road, you have no grounds to complain about where it leads them.

Noll identifies a distinct way that the Jungian movement advanced by developing Jungian "clubs," where lay people gathered to talk about Jung, his influences on their lives, and his interest in magic. Noll gives these "clubs" much credit for the expansion of Jungian thought in the popular culture, but I think a better case can be made for the view that the popular culture picked up, from sources similar to Jung, an interest in occultism and neo-paganism on its own.

Although given a boost by Jung, New Age prophets, channeling, the earth goddess, and the rest come directly from nineteenth-century occultists. Before Jung there were the "masters" from Madame Blavatsky and a Teutonic Brotherhood from Guido von List with his imagined ancient Teutonic religion of "Wotanism." This kind of thought—fundamentally magical and conducive to idolatry and myth—has been around since Abraham tried to leave it behind in Ur of the Chaldees. Jung's teachings give this alluring vision of life some respectability in our day.

Jung loses touch completely when, according to Noll, he follows his own active imagination and free association away from the Freudian assumption of sexual meanings in dreams and symbols and studies the Roman religion of Mithraism, ultimately to incorporate its themes into his visionary thoughts. In fact, Noll claims that "Jung believed he had undergone a direct initiation into the ancient Hellenistic mysteries and had even experienced deification in doing so. This 'mystery of deification' gave him 'certainty of immortality.'" Noll means deification *literally*, and presents these notions under the heading "Jung becomes a God." Noll has had to quote quite "selectively" from Jung's *Analytical Psychology* to form such an opinion, ignoring such passages as: "When images come to you and are not understood, you are in the society of the gods or if you will the lunatic society." And then Jung added: "Another may identify himself with the images and become a crank or a fool." The writings of all the dynamic psychologists are so loaded with metaphors that a critic can quote out of context—as does Noll here—to make the author look foolish.

With these damaging interpretations of Jung's interests and sources, Noll moves on to claim that most of the Jungian ideas—the archetypes, the collective unconscious, the nature of dream messages, the character of symbols—are "cultic" and therefore unworthy contributions to psychodynamic thought. Noll acknowledges that many gifted people found much to appreciate in Jung, but, in concluding his book, he discounts their testimony by implying that they were unaware of Jung's weird sources, for they only met him "after he had begun a revision of the basic metaphors of his psychology when his cult began to grow into an international movement. . . . The darker volkish nuances in Jung's transcendental theories would have bypassed them completely."

The Jung Cult closes with a chapter on the transmission of Jung's authority to others. Titled "The Secret Church," this chapter describes how the Jungian movement has grown and how Jung's writings are studied as a kind of "new dispensation." They are recited by some ministers in their services, as in the New Age "gnostic Church" in San Francisco; in some Unitarian churches, they are also read along with the writings of Emerson. Noll ends by asking: "Are we witnessing the incipient stages of a faith based on the apotheosis of Jung as a God-man? Only history will tell if Jung's Nietzschean religion will finally win its Kulturkampf and replace Christianity with its own personal religion of the future."

The Jung Cult is an extended hatchet job. If it is not entirely devoid of truth, of it, one may say, that which is true in it is not new and that which is new is not true. Absent from this book is any acknowledgment that many of Jung's ideas have been influential in psychotherapeutic practice. For example, it was Jung who recommended to Freud that every trainee should be analyzed as a requirement for becoming a psychoanalyst. And analysts such as Erik Erikson, Heinz Kohut, and Donald Winnicott all drew inspiration (mostly unacknowledged) from Jung.

Meanwhile, Jung's ideas penetrate the popular imagination in many ways: some explicit, as in the novels of the Canadian writer Robertson Davies; some more implicit, as in

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many of the writings and the neo-pagan scripts of contemporary gurus, dramatists, and filmmakers. Jung chose to move in directions slightly different from Freud and picked up more of the detritus of European neo-romantic irrationalism.

This book is another volley shot from the Freudian camp across the bow of the Jungian flagship. Dr. Noll pretends to be "shocked" by Jung. But he needn't be. The only way to appreciate any of the thought about depth psychology in our century is to take as seriously as possible the method of developing beliefs about meaning that lies at its heart and was first proposed by Freud. This will immediately illuminate how many different outcomes the method of "free" association permits, and how these outcomes and beliefs are, almost invariably, tied to their times. The psychodynamic approach can greatly enhance the understanding of patients, but only when it gets down to cases and leaves the larger theoretical vision alone. Then the contributions of Freud, Jung, or Adler can, on occasion, be found useful to patients in distress.

Exodus—II

OUT OF EGYPT: A MEMOIR. *By André Aciman. Farrar, Straus & Giroux. $20.*

Reviewed by JONATHAN M. ELUKIN

The recurring persecutions and expulsions that have marked Jewish history often set the stage for powerfully creative combinations between Jews and their places of temporary refuge. When filtered through the consciousness of writers such as Elias Canetti or Eva Hoffman, the recollections of childhoods spent in these diaspora settings create seductive memoirs that transcend the boundaries of personal memory. André Aciman tells such a story about his family's sojourn in Egypt. From their home in Constantinople, his great aunts and uncles brought to Alexandria entrepreneurial drive, lucky contacts with powerful Egyptians, five or six languages, and an unbreakable spirit. Aciman retraces his family's life through two world wars, their own dramas and quarrels, and, finally, their exile from Egypt.

In a quiet way, as if introducing them at a family gathering, Aciman gives life to his memories and to his eccentric relatives: great-uncle Vili, an inveterate rake, re-creating himself as soldier, spy, financier, merchant, and smuggler to lead the family through several wars until his expulsion from Egypt; Flora, a relative newcomer from Europe, who became the object of heated pursuit by the family's predatory men while she maintained a fierce independence; the Saint (Aciman's maternal grandmother) and the Princess (his paternal grandmother), whose prickly friendship and rivalry set the boundaries for his childhood; Aciman's own mother and father, whose lives are marked by her deafness and his affairs. We watch their fights, celebrations, defeats, deaths, and brief glimpses of their exile in small apartments in France and Italy. (Uncle Vili, typically, secured a large estate in England.)

There are many secondary players as well, including the family's Arab servants, the constant rhythms of whose lives are heard behind the crescendos of family life. Aciman does not shy away from the hard realities of the servants' lives—their grinding poverty and dependence. The relationship was not easy, for the family deprecated all Arabs and butchered Arabic. Despite all this, powerful ties of mutual affection and loyalty were forged. To ease their maid Latifa's dying, for example, the Princess saved the woman's son from a life of crime. He rose to run the family's textile plant, and wept with Aciman's father when it was nationalized by Colonel Nasser. In another gesture that went unremarked, doubling the irony, Hassan, the chauffeur, brought the family two bluefish caught while he was patrolling with the Egyptian navy during the 1956 Suez war. They all lived in a world circumscribed by stereotypes, but proximity and compassion chipped away at prejudice. If only for brief moments, they saw one another as human beings.

In some ways, the family made life difficult enough for themselves. Aciman spares no one, including himself, often tempering nostalgia with moments of harsh judgment. It was a claustrophobic world for a child, particularly when the family was torn by rivalries, betrayals, failed marriages, and constant bickering.

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Still, the feeling of being part of a clan, of belonging, of having a refuge in times of danger and wartime blackouts made his family the center of his life and identity:

So tea was over, I thought, already missing the spell of that moment when my uncle and I had opened the door to find everyone already seated in the living room, the sun just barely set over the horizon, and everyone hurrying to make room for us. Sitting quietly next to my parents, my cousins, my aunts and uncles, everyone's thighs cozily glued to mine, I knew that even if I disliked almost everyone in this room, it was good to be with them, good to hear the ritual hubbub of tea, good to look and be looked at.

The city of Alexandria carried this family through the twentieth century. Its boulevards, beaches, and alleys saw war, revolution, capitalism, movies, sophisticated shops, and a heady cosmopolitanism. Arabs, Greeks, Jews, Europeans jostled one another in apartments, shops, and on the beaches of the city, creating combinations of people in which there were invariably religious and ethnic echoes. For example, on an idyllic morning at the beach, the author, along with Roxane, his beautiful Persian nanny, and Signor Dall'Abaco, his Italian tutor, bought the traditional breakfast *ful* from a vendor:

When we finally reached his van, Roxane handed him the pot. He filled it and wished us a holy Sunday. We stared at him with a puzzled look: Why would a Moslem ever want to wish us a holy Sunday? He must have read our surprise, for, after looking around furtively, he pulled up his sleeve, displaying the inside of his wrist on which a large cross was tattooed. "I'm a Copt." The current regime was not sympathetic to Copts. Though Signor Dall'Abaco was an atheist, Roxane a Zoroastrian, and I a Jew, all three of us wished him a holy Sunday in return.

The Jewish actors in this drama left in the years after the Suez war, accompanied by arrests, terror, and hatred, but Aciman's memories allow us to see the fragile but compelling vitality of a heterogeneous society. We would do well to treasure them.

As Aciman leads us through this multivalent Alexandria, the English of the book dissolves, and we can hear the pidgin Arabic, French, Italian, and Ladino (the Spanish spoken by Sephardic Jews) in which his relatives and

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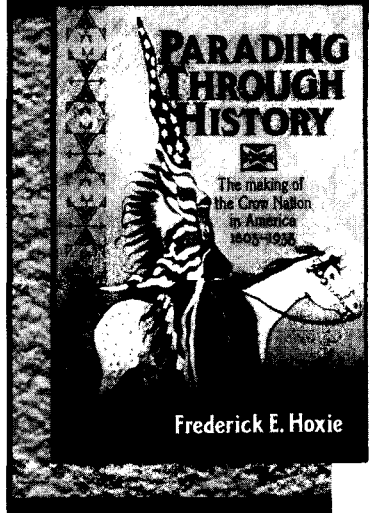

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friends courted, planned, and argued. Aciman captures the lingering yet still visceral pleasures of Ladino for the Sephardic Jews of Egypt:

To the three who had discovered one another, Ladino spoke of their homesickness for Constantinople. To them, it was a language of loosened neckties, unbuttoned shirts, overused slippers, a language as intimate, natural as the odor of one's sheets, of one's closets, of one's cooking. They returned to it after speaking French, with the gratified relief of left-handed people who, once in private, are no longer forced to do things with their right.

Ladino, or Spanish, as the Princess calls it, " '*réveille l'âme*, lifts up the soul.' "

The spell of Aciman's own language is broken only very rarely. Occasionally the prose is a bit too polished or overwrought, as when it purports to be describing the thoughts of a young boy. Then, again, the book is the record of an adult trying to recover those thoughts. One wonders also about the accuracy of some of the dialogue, resurrected so minutely after all these years. Still, the dialogue is very much alive. Finally, the whole family unfortunately took a perverse pleasure in their ignorance of Judaism and in mocking fragments of Jewish ritual. (However, they were firmly in the grip of some customs, for the whole family took turns jumping over a censer of incense after Latifa died in order to *faire boukhour*—to make a blessing and ward off further misfortune.) Their smugness about Judaism grates, but with religion as with everything else, this family made its own rules.

Yet it is not these qualms, but rather images of quail falling from the sky that linger with the reader. In Aciman's memories the Egypt of his youth is a magical place, and who would not agree after reading his description of how quail, exhausted from their migration, fall to the earth at the end of summer—to be scooped up, like manna from heaven.

By the end, we do not want to leave Alexandria when the family is forced to flee. We want one last evening stroll and one more look at the sea. On his last night in Alexandria, the author sat eating a small cake made during Ramadan, the long Islamic holiday of daytime fasts. "There, heaving myself up on the stone wall, I sat with my back to the city, facing the sea, holding the delicacy I was about to devour. Abdou would have called this a real *mazag*, accompanying the word, as all Egyptians do, with a gesture of the hand—a flattened palm brought to the side of the head—signifying blissful plenitude and the prolonged, cultivated consumption of everyday pleasures." In *Out of Egypt*, Aciman has given us all a *mazag*.

Thomas Wolfe's Co-Author

THE STARWICK EPISODES. *By Thomas Wolfe. Edited by Richard S. Kennedy. Louisiana State University Press. $25. Paper, $11.95.*

[GEORGE WEBBER, WRITER]: AN INTRODUCTION BY A FRIEND. *By Thomas Wolfe. Edited by John L. Idol, Jr. Thomas Wolfe Society. Not for sale.*

THE PARTY AT JACK'S. *By Thomas Wolfe. Edited by Suzanne Stutman and John L. Idol, Jr. University of North Carolina Press. $19.95.*

Reviewed by JOHN HALBERSTADT

Thomas Wolfe, the six foot, five inch enfant terrible of 1930s American literature, was badly served by his editors, one of whom tried his hand at impersonating Wolfe's literary style. When he died unexpectedly at the age of thirty-seven in 1938, Wolfe left a new editor, Edward Aswell, of Harper and Brothers, a million-plus-word manuscript not yet even in rough-draft form, which Wolfe called *The Web and the Rock*. It was a collection—organized, certainly—of old and new material, fragments, and chapters that came in variant versions.

Aswell had advanced Wolfe ten thousand dollars for the manuscript before he'd read a word. He was excited that Wolfe had finally broken with Maxwell Perkins of Scribner's, who had first brought Wolfe to fame with *Look Homeward Angel* (1929) and *Of Time and the River* (1935). Perkins cut about three hundred pages from the first of these passionately lyrical, autobiographical works. The second novel, nine hundred pages in its published form, was cut still more drastically. (Wolfe

✪ JOHN HALBERSTADT's work has appeared in the *Yale Review*, the *New York Review of Books*, and the *Harvard Magazine*.

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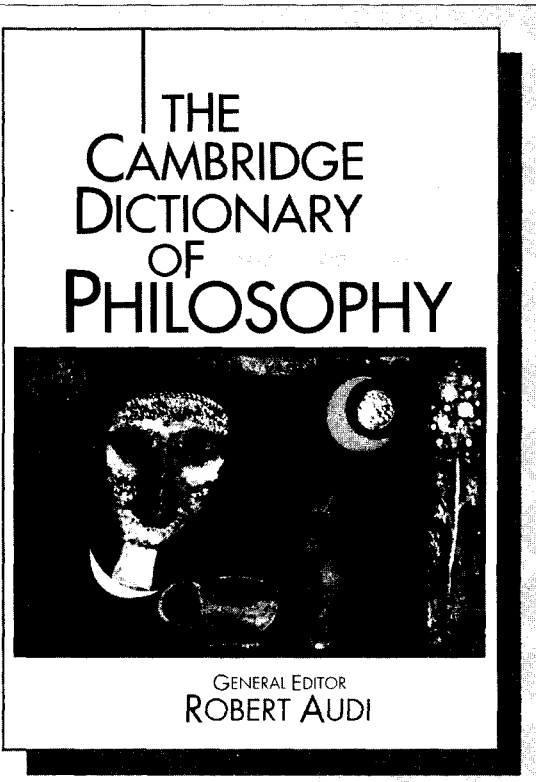

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originally envisioned a novel more than twice as long as *Of Time and the River.*)

These new books under review—*The Starwick Episodes; [George Webber, Writer]: An Introduction by a Friend;* and *The Party at Jack's*—are, in one case, a remnant of Perkins's surgery. In the others, we are given restorations of the original of what Aswell, Wolfe's posthumous editor, in his scramble for material, raided for use in his creation of Wolfe's three posthumous books: *The Web and the Rock* (1939), *You Can't Go Home Again* (1940), and *The Hills Beyond* (1941).

After publication, the Wolfe cache of manuscripts was deposited in Harvard's rare manuscripts library, the Houghton Library, where it has been immured for perhaps forty years. Few scholars, with the exception of the editors of these new books, have had access to these materials.

Richard Kennedy's *The Starwick Episodes* compiles nothing less than ninety-seven pages of outtakes from *Of Time and the River.* This is not, let me add, a "restoration" of a Wolfe book, just leftovers from Perkins's editing of what Wolfe wrote about a single character in the novel, the precious, snobbish homosexual Starwick. He is based on Kenneth Raisbeck, a Harvard classmate of Wolfe's. Kennedy's biographical introduction recalls Raisbeck's tour of Paris with Wolfe and two female companions of Raisbeck's, which inspired many passages in *Of Time and the River.*

A deleted episode shows Starwick's malicious amusement when a whore in a brothel embarrasses Eugene (the Thomas Wolfe character) in front of female friends by pointing out that last time ("La dernière fois") Eugene had visited *her.* "You seem to be quite popular in here," a female friend of Eugene's bitterly remarks.

In another brothel episode cut by the perhaps overly proper Perkins, Eugene is cruel with his effeminate friend. "What the hell did you come here for . . . if you didn't intend to take a girl?"

As readers of *Of Time and the River* may recall, Eugene, in rage, finally threw Starwick against a wall. But without the scrap of Perkins's surgery in which we learn that a male pickup of Starwick's named Alec cheated Starwick out of five hundred francs ($30) lent him by Eugene, the motive for such violence is not fully clear. (Alec was going to teach Starwick how to smoke an opium pipe and absconded with the money.) Eugene is fed up with "Christ-like" Starwick's forgiveness, even after he sees that his lover has vanished with Eugene's funds.

I've owned a copy of *The Starwick Episodes* since 1989 when it was that year's gift from the Thomas Wolfe Society—the gift is made possible by the Wolfe estate—to the Society's five hundred members. (Members receive materials not generally available to others; there have been fifteen of these titles so far.) Last year's gift, John Idol's *[George Webber, Writer]: An Introduction by a Friend,* is a roughly sixty-page narrative experiment written sometime after Wolfe had shaken free of Perkins, in which Wolfe had tried to come to grips with the "stinger" (Idol's term) that he was only capable of writing literal autobiography. Annoyed by this aspersion, Wolfe invented an older figure assigned by Wolfe's latest surrogate, George Webber, to serve as his literary executor.

The executor, who has known Wolfe's hero since birth, recalls conversations with him about the consequences of his use of autobiography in *Home to Our Mountains (Look Homeward, Angel).* Aswell combined the old man's side of the conversation with the description Wolfe provided elsewhere for two younger salesmen to create what is in effect a "hybrid character." The hybrid is Randy Shepperton, close friend of the hero in *You Can't Go Home Again.* Idol is aware that "the appearance of Randy Shepperton . . . as a confidant in Chapters 24 and 26 of *You Can't Go Home Again* is an unacknowledged 'creation' by Aswell."

John Idol and Suzanne Stutman's *The Party at Jack's* is an impressive attempt to reclaim the 239-page original of the 175-page unit in *You Can't Go Home Again,* which Aswell named "The House That Jack Built." The central event in this novella is a party thrown by Esther Jack (a thinly disguised version of Wolfe's stage-designer mistress Aline Bernstein) and her wealthy husband that attracts or includes almost every American social class or type: an exploitative banker, a fallen socialite, a homosexual clown, maids, a cook, elevator operators. The featured entertainment is the jejune wire-doll circus of the chic if inept Piggy Logan (based on Alexander Calder, inventor of the mobile), who is the rage that year among all the party's jaded guests.

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But the performance fails miserably; the wire dolls don't do what they're supposed to. Worse, fire breaks out in the building. It all symbolizes, as Richard Kennedy taught Wolfe readers long ago, the breakdown of the capitalistic enterprise generally.

Wolfe's novella was an editor's dream. Aswell cut the first twenty-nine pages completely—material about Jack's past as a Jew in Germany—and expunged all subsequent "German" references. Since argument continues over Wolfe's anti-Semitism, it should be said that Wolfe sympathized with Jack as a schoolboy when classmates ridiculed Jews for being a "race of pawnbrokers and moneylenders."

References to Esther Jack's growing deafness were cut. (Aline Bernstein herself was somewhat deaf. Aswell may have been concerned with libel.) "The trouble with her," her husband jokes, "iss not that she iss deaf. She iss dumb!" Removed, too, was the scene of Jack bathing, brooding on "the flower of his sex: short, strong and wrinkled . . . . and circumcised, it floated slowly upward like a fish at rest, gently sustained upon the floating pontoons of his ballocks."

Esther's actually trying to push her lover and her best friend—"My two! The two I love . . . "—into sexual relations (even indicating a convenient room) was also slashed. This cut can be thought of as a creative contribution, indeed, since it changes our conception of Esther. Wolfe was trying to say that even this almost transcendental hostess was not completely free of the corruption characteristic of her circle and of her time. Aswell's altered Esther is a purer, less complex lady. Omission, as we see, can change everything.

Editing by Black & Decker methods, Aswell eliminated a few major characters wholesale, and chainsawed his way through the novella generally, splicing paragraphs onto subsequent ones or onto paragraphs found pages later. Almost every paragraph was revised or tampered with, and more than one full page was completely written by Aswell. He invented the episode of Piggy Logan leaving the party at the time of the fire, though Wolfe had only prepared us for his entrance. "But where was Piggy Logan?" Aswell wrote in the first of three paragraphs he invented. "Was the idiot changing his clothes after all?"

Modeling his effort slightly on the entrance description, Wolfe's epigone gives us a cartoon buffoon "grunting along with a heavy suitcase in each hand," clothing slung over a shoulder, "overweight tan shoes" (itself an Aswell contribution) tied around his neck "where they clunked against his chest" as Piggy tries to make his exit. His "neat grey hat" is "perched on top of" his football helmet. (There was a helmet in the entrance, nothing more. The additional touches are Aswell's.) Aswell's Piggy is more preposterous and slapstick than Wolfe's.

The tireless John Idol and Suzanne Stutman as well as Richard Kennedy, doyen of Wolfe scholars, have enriched Wolfe's readers by showing us what Wolfe—not his editors—actually wrote, and by allowing us the opportunity to discover the editorial contribution for ourselves.

Sad City

CITY ON A HILL: TESTING THE AMERICAN DREAM AT CITY COLLEGE. *By James Traub. Addison-Wesley. $25.*

Reviewed by MORRIS FREEDMAN

The City College of New York, CCNY, the oldest unit of the City University of New York, sits on a hill overlooking Harlem. Once regarded as the jewel in New York's public higher education crown, it used to be called the Harvard of the proletariat. Today only about half its students ever make it to graduation; the majority can barely read or write English or do basic math.

Thoroughly documented by now, the sad saga has been the object more of lamentation and polemic than of patient examination. James Traub, in his book *City on a Hill*, recounts some of the steps marking the descent and provides a panorama of montages and vignettes that records the dismal contemporary scene movingly.

The fall from glory has been spectacular. From around 1900 to past midcentury, City's

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graduates had gone on to become Nobel Prize winners (eight of them, more than from any other public institution in the country); lawyers and judges, including Supreme Court Justice Felix Frankfurter; physicians and scientists, including the developer of the polio vaccine, Jonas Salk; Ph.D. degree holders in profusion, more than from any campus in the country except Berkeley's; a fair number of the country's leaders, including former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Colin Powell; countless professors (including several at Harvard), writers, editors, engineers, teachers, lawyers, social workers, accountants, businessmen.

Traub lingers over the futile classroom struggles of the impoverished immigrant students on campus in recent years. He hauntingly details their Dickensian lives, limning powerful, multi-dimensional portraits of heroic students and teachers, both those who heartrendingly fail and those who, desperately, marginally succeed. Only a handful—students and teachers—can remotely be said to prevail. At times the students, writhing like figures in a tableau of Hell, appear victims of a monstrous comedic scam.

We ponder absurdities, perhaps the most grotesque that of a professor patiently defending, before a jeering mob, his qualifications to head a department. Traub describes an undergraduate English course that might be merely premature or incongruous elsewhere but is farcical here. It offers, according to the course outline, "Linguistics, Formalism, Semiotics: Language and Parole, Synchrony and Diachrony, Signified and Signifier, Denotation and Connotation, Story and Plot, Defamiliarization." Readings include Benjamin, Bakhtin, Propp, Barthes, Derrida, and Lacan. Traub quotes a student's response after perusing one writer. "I may have misread him," the student says; "I've misread everyone else so far."

"It's true," the instructor explained to Traub, "that these students don't have very much background, but I think in some ways that they have more of an intuitive understanding of critical theory because of who they are. These theories deal with marginalization and the suppressed viewpoint of the minority, and these students are themselves members of minority groups. They don't have the sensibility of the dominant group."

Other teachers were also given to fanciful rationalizations or striking metaphors. An appealing philosophy professor, a young missionary from Harvard, remarked that City's "tail" was simply longer than those of other colleges. By "tail" she meant the sweep from the least to the most able students.

All analyses of City's fall that I've read or heard ascribe it to the fateful "open admissions" decisions of the early 1970s. Before, only those applicants could enter who had good high school grades and had completed appropriate preparatory courses. After, anyone with any high school degree could enter. Standards quickly became minimal. Traub reports illiterate and innumerate students getting A's.

But City's transformation reflected as well a national slackening of fundamental academic standards. Faculty commonly used to garner credentials the hard way, for intrinsic merit, not for accidents of ethnic origin, gender, pedigree, faddish ideology, public-relations glitz, or any of the myriad irrelevant or confusing factors that experienced and attentive officials normally learn to discount.

After World War II, campuses responded to pressures to expand by relaxing restraints not only on admission and retention of students but on appointment and advancement of professors and naming of administrators. Inept authorities hired and rewarded incompetents, some who turned out to be rogues, and failed generally to police staff. The public, judges, legislators, and faculty themselves came to believe that tenure freed a professor from review and accountability.

Traub devotes a good deal of troubled attention to the bizarre and by now notorious case of Professor Leonard Jeffries, which, in company with Traub's accounts of distraught teachers and confused administrators, strengthens one's sense that open admissions alone did not open floodgates.

Top administration did not move to fire Jeffries, a tenured professor, after due process, for extravagant unprofessionalism, of which it had abundant evidence. Even the American Association of University Professors would not have protested such a firing. Instead, his superiors removed him peremptorily as head of black studies only after he stunned the country with a widely publicized, madly anti-white, anti-Semitic speech. The irregular removal

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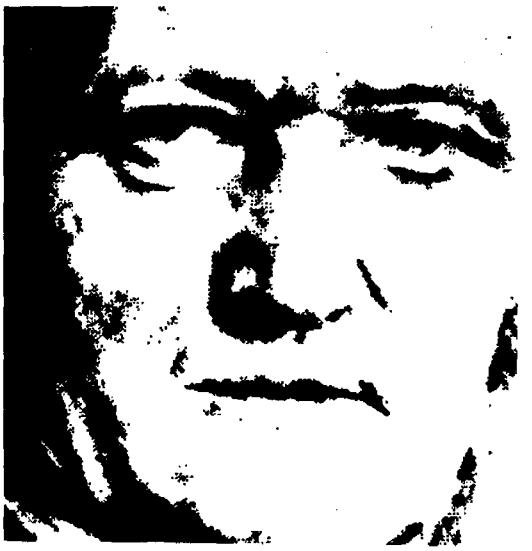
Richard Wagner

translated by william ashton ellis



Art and Politics
These essays converge upon Wagner's desire to define and reform German culture. Citing Johann Sebastian Bach as his precursor, Wagner fought to persuade his readers that German culture had a historic destiny, and that destiny was shaped by music.

Jesus of Nazareth
& Other Writings
The title essay expresses Wagner's revolutionary ideals, justified (or so he thought) by Jesus and the early Church. At the time Wagner considered Jesus a revolutionary leader whose struggles with authority and traditions were much like his own.

Actors and Singers
The essays collected in this volume were written between 1870 and 1873, years that brought a transformation in Germany. The title essay, "Actors and Singers," is one of Wagner's most deliberate and philosophical writings.

The Art-Work of the Future
& Other Works
The title essay marked a turning point in Wagner's life: an appraisal of the revolutionary passions of mid-century Europe, his farewell to symphonic music, and his vision of the music to come.

Judaism in Music
& Other Essays
This collection includes the notorious 1850 article "Judaism in Music," which caused such a firestorm that nearly twenty years later Wagner published an unapologetic appendix.

Pilgrimage to Beethoven
& Other Essays
This collection provides translations of the first two volumes of Wagner's *Gesammelte Schriften*. The essays reveal how committed Wagner was to emphasizing Germanic qualities in his music and define his opposition to the music of France and Italy.

Religion and Art
"Religion and Art" is the pivot of the works collected here. Also included are Wagner's defining essays on "Public and Popularity" and "The Public in Time and Space," and other works that speak his mind about strengthening the spirit through music.

Opera and Drama
Originally published in 1851, when Wagner was in political exile, *Opera and Drama* outlines a new, revolutionary type of musical stage work, which would finally materialize as *The Ring of the Nibelung*.

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left him free to pursue his professorship as before and to sue (successfully) for reinstatement as head of his department.

Throughout, Traub emphasizes the college's rooting in the vast territory of deprivation that is New York City. But a mile or so away is Hunter College, another CUNY component, with a conventional body of students. Private Columbia College, a few blocks south, on another hill looming over Harlem and with a fair representation of its residents, holds its academic own with other Ivy League schools. Other noted schools set in rundown neighborhoods, at Berkeley, Chicago, and Yale, continue to thrive intellectually.

No. Open admissions, poverty, geography, demographics, and local politics do not add up to explain City's present sad state. Never mind other campuses. What about those current strong enclaves at City, in engineering and history? Traub speaks of these with admiration, but he does not explicitly tell us how their handful of personnel maintain "elitist" performance in the midst of "egalitarian" squalor and omnipresent pressures to downgrade. We gather that faculty there have joined with students to beat the system.

Traub's catalogue of the troubles of present City undergraduates reminds me of my own student days there, more than a half century ago: *la plus ça change*, . . . But in the olden days we became students only after we proved, with our high school records, that we could do college-level work. Extremist defenders of open admission insist that requiring evidence of such readiness, the whole process of selective admission, is invidious. Among other changes, they have redefined college-level work to include proficiency in remedial classes. Traub does tell us about forces on campus and in the city, painfully sensitive to the loss of ancient glories, who sincerely believe, sometimes with reason and some evidence, in the possibility of restoring standards.

City's achievements helped persuade the nation to accept the rightness of full public higher education. And, in spite of all the disorder and distress, City still strains mightily to offer the best chance it can to those who find themselves on its hill.

Unhappily, that best chance, as it plays itself out pragmatically, may never be enough to revive the past. At least in the olden days, we students were sophisticated enough to compensate in some measure for rotting infrastructure, malfunctioning bureaucracy, political disasters, hostile faculty, sometimes to the point of teaching ourselves as a last resort. At the very least, we had working for us a solid high school education.

Today few bring to the fulfillment of their hopes more than their own underdeveloped, undisciplined energies and raw virtues; they are systematically seduced into thinking they can do college work, exploited, neglected, patronized, coddled by professors and deans who seem, at best, overwhelmed or bewildered by their mission.

Family Virtues

THE DE-MORALIZATION OF SOCIETY: FROM VICTORIAN VIRTUES TO MODERN VALUES. *By Gertrude Himmelfarb. Knopf. $24.*

Reviewed by ALAN JACOBS

Some years ago the popular historian Barbara Tuchman published *A Distant Mirror,* a book that claims that in the struggles of the fourteenth century we can discern the outlines of our own time's conflicts. In *The De-Moralization of Society* a much finer historian produces a highly provocative exercise in the same genre. For Gertrude Himmelfarb, the Victorians, though much closer to us than the medievals not only in time but also in the particular social problems with which they were confronted, are of special interest because they responded to those problems so differently—and with so much more success.

Himmelfarb's forte has always been intellectual history, and each of her books on Victorian thought and culture has been notable for its refusal to accept the glib, reductive clichés from which the Victorians have suffered more than any of our other ancestors. *The De-Moralization of Society* indicates that the longer she studies Victorian society, the more she respects its inhabitants, not only for their good intentions but also for their real—and, to the unbiased eye, striking—achievements in social reform. In essence, Himmelfarb is putting a

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forceful question to the would-be reformers of today: When one considers that in recent decades the rates of serious crime, illegitimate births, and even (by some measures) poverty have been rising in England and America, while the Victorians achieved steady and in some cases remarkable progress in responding to all these problems, can we safely continue to ignore their achievements and merely mock them for rigidity and intolerance?

Himmelfarb repeatedly insists that Victorian society was in many respects deeply flawed. In the history of the period, "there is enough to give pause to the most ardent Victoriaphile." But even if the Victorian age were perfect, it would not be possible simply to "emulate a society . . . at a different stage of economic, technological, social, political, and cultural development" than our own. Still, if we cannot, strictly speaking, imitate, we can learn; and Himmelfarb makes a convincing case that there is much to be learned from a close look at how Victorians responded to their social problems. What she counsels is very different from the kind of learning available to the Whig interpreters of history, who respect only those people and movements that seem to foreshadow the interpreters' own world—the rest of history being worth knowing only if such knowledge helps us to avoid repeating our ancestors' many and tragic mistakes. Throughout *The De-Moralization of Society* Himmelfarb conducts a sotto voce debate, chiefly in footnotes, with historians who find no lessons, or only negative ones, in the past. For many modern historians, the Victorians succeeded in nothing, not even in good intentions; for others, they succeeded only when they thought as *we* think. Though such positions are assumed more often than argued, neither seems self-evident to Himmelfarb.

The question of intentions is a particularly important one. Himmelfarb repeatedly takes up the most common of all charges against the Victorians, that they were hypocrites. (The skepticism many modern historians turn upon the Victorians' motives is equaled only by their confidence in their own.) Himmelfarb is quick to acknowledge that the Victorians often failed, sometimes quite dramatically, to live up to the moral standards that they relentlessly proclaimed. But hypocrisy is not the only cause of inconsistency: if one's standards are high enough, after all, one is bound to fall short of them.

"The Victorians," Himmelfarb writes, "thought it no small virtue to maintain the appearance, the manners, of good conduct even while violating some moral principle, for in their demeanor they affirmed the legitimacy of the principle itself." William Gladstone's diaries, when published a few years ago, occasioned much glee among those who found this moral and moralistic man's fascination with prostitutes an exemplary case of Victorian hypocrisy; but, Himmelfarb argues, we only know of this fascination because Gladstone recognized his behavior as sinful and recorded it as such. "The eminent Victorians . . . did not take sin lightly—their own sin or anyone else's. If they were censorious of others, they were also guilt-ridden about themselves."

In like fashion, Himmelfarb repeatedly shows that most of the "eminent Victorians," those currently in favor as well as those in disrepute, were more complicated than many historians want us to think. Her chapter on Victorian feminism is especially interesting in this respect. She reminds us that many of the most influential and brilliant women of the

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period, including George Eliot, Florence Nightingale, and (from a later generation) Beatrice Webb, conspicuously failed to support women's suffrage. (On this subject, however, Himmelfarb's desire to counter the conventional wisdom leads her into at least one significant error: she makes a list of prominent literary women who failed to sign a petition in favor of women's suffrage, but several of the women on her list were dead when the petition was circulated, one [Charlotte Brontë] for fifteen years.) "It takes no great act of imagination," argues Himmelfarb, "to reconstruct the case for the suffrage, which now seems so obvious and natural as to require no explanation or defense. What does require imagination is understanding the reasoning of those opposed to it, particularly women who were already active in public affairs" and who had already violated some of the characteristic Victorian proprieties.

By exercising her imagination in exploring Victorian attitudes toward this and other questions—the relation between manners and morals, the problem of poverty (about which she has already written better than anyone else), educational reforms, philanthropy, and so on—Himmelfarb brings the Victorians out of the Manichaean world of Whig history, in which one is either saved (i.e., a progressive reformer) or damned (i.e., a hopeless reactionary), and shows them to be recognizably like us in the breadth of their reactions to social concerns. When one sees how few of the major minds of the time thought in predictable or narrow ways, one comes to believe more fully in the sincere passion with which the Victorians, at their best, struggled with their social problems.

Himmelfarb argues that the Victorian age, for all its flaws, managed to achieve a degree of amelioration of injustice and suffering that the modern world can only envy. Near the end of the book, Himmelfarb ventures into the (for her) unfamiliar territory of graphs, and the graphs are striking indeed. Note the steady and stately decline of crime in England and Wales during the second half of the nineteenth century. Note the precipitous rise in crime—the graph looks like one side of the Matterhorn—in the United States during the last thirty years. (She also provides graphs for the recent history of England and Wales; these are even more dramatic.) But her concern is less with establishing the statistical differences between the two periods, which is easy enough to do, than with exploring the potential causes of the differences. And here we come to the meat of her argument.

Himmelfarb believes that what fundamentally separates us from the Victorians, in character and in the achievement of significant social reform, is that they believed in virtues while we believe only in values. For Himmelfarb the shift from virtues to values indicates "the great philosophical revolution of modernity." The particular virtues in which the Victorians believed (preeminently "the belief in family and home, respectability and character") are to Himmelfarb important, but less important than "an ethos that does not denigrate or . . . thoroughly relativize" virtues by remaking them as mere "values" that people just happen to hold.

Much of this book can be seen as Himmelfarb's response to the claim made by many historians that beliefs and convictions, virtues and values, are mere by-products of material conditions. "The ethos of a society, its moral and spiritual character," she argues, "cannot be reduced to economic, material, political or other factors." Instead, "values—or better yet, virtues—are a determining factor in their own right. So far from being a 'reflection,' as the Marxist says, of the economic realities, they are themselves, as often as not, the crucial agent in shaping those realities." If our actions differ from the Victorians', that is because our beliefs differ from theirs. And those differences begin to look less and less to our credit.

To Himmelfarb's credit, she never forces upon the reader the parallels between the Victorian age and this one—except in the prologue and epilogue, they are rarely mentioned. But having been alerted to them from the start, the reader can see that the Victorian themes and topics presented have been chosen with an eye toward the modern situation and can consider the parallels all along. Himmelfarb's reticence here is, I think, quite effective, especially since she is not counseling mere imitation of the Victorians. To see the energetic integrity that the best minds of that age brought to the most serious social problems, all of which must have seemed more intractable than our own, is rather shaming. If many readers feel that shame, *The De-Moralization of Society* is a success.

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Fetch, Teddy, Fetch

THEODORE H. WHITE AND JOURNALISM AS ILLUSION. *By Joyce Hoffmann. University of Missouri Press. $27.50.*

Reviewed by THEODORE PAPPAS

In Evelyn Waugh's *Scoop,* written nearly sixty years ago, Fleet Street scribblers, still wet behind the ears, are told fabulous stories about the great Wenlock Jakes, America's highest paid journalist.

Why, once Jakes went out to cover a revolution in one of the Balkan capitals. He overslept in his carriage, woke up at the wrong station, didn't know any different, got out, went straight to a hotel, and cabled off a thousand-word story about barricades in the streets, flaming churches, machine guns answering the rattle of his typewriter as he wrote, a dead child, like a broken doll, spreadeagled in the deserted roadway below his window—*you* know.

For his harrowing and heroic "reporting" on the carnage and human plight, Jakes receives the Nobel Peace Prize.

According to the Yugoslav press agency Tanjug, on January 28, 1993, Bosnian Serb soldiers captured a British mercenary named Robert Allen Lofthouse, along with "his diary and other documents [which] indicate his connections with an American agent code named 2-IC. 2-IC's true identity is Roy Gutman, an undercover agent working as a *Newsday* correspondent." Lofthouse claims to have transmitted to Gutman and to the BBC monthly reports on Serbian war crimes related to "ethnic cleansing" and "rape hotels," and for each transmission he received five hundred pounds. "That's the only kind of reports they wanted from me," said Lofthouse, who denied ever actually seeing a "rape hotel." "I staged the photos with the help of the men commanded by a Moslem intelligence officer called Amir."

Is Lofthouse's confession mere Serb propaganda, or is Roy Gutman, the Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *Witness to Genocide,* America's real-life Wenlock Jakes?

The noble pretensions of the Fourth Estate notwithstanding, lies, half-truths, scandalmongering, and fantasies have always played a prominent role in American journalism. *Washington Post* reporter Janey Cooke's fictions, Connie Chung's whispers, and Cokie Roberts's fake backdrops are only a few of the techniques that have led some journalists (such as Carl Bernstein) to speak of their profession's "crisis in character" and "recent" decline into "irresponsibility" since the golden age of investigative reporting in the 1970s. But questions of professional ethics have troubled American journalism throughout this century, from the Hearst and Pulitzer propaganda against Spain in the 1890s, to the Soviet propaganda masquerading as truth by Walter Duranty of the *New York Times* in the 1930s, to the enemy-guided tours of the battlefield that Harrison Salisbury received in North Vietnam and that Peter Arnett took in Iraq.

Joyce Hoffmann, a professor of journalism at Old Dominion University, has written an informative study of one of the most successful practitioners of this "journalism as illusion," Theodore H. White. And though she seldom strays from her subject long enough to comment more generally on the "adversarial"

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press, about its penchant for consensus and addiction to self-censorship, her study is a straightforward, honest, and long-overdue look at the life (and lies) of one of America's most influential journalists.

Theodore ("Teddy") White was born in 1915 in Boston's Dorchester neighborhood, an area heavily populated with Jewish immigrants. His father was a Marxist, his mother an observant Jew; the family was impoverished throughout the 1920s and 1930s. Teddy attended Harvard on a scholarship for promising newsboys and concentrated on history and Asian studies under the eminent John King Fairbank, who convinced White to pursue a career as a foreign correspondent. Upon graduating in 1938 and receiving a fellowship for traveling abroad, White set sail for China.

The young correspondent landed in Hong Kong and, much to his surprise, landed a job with the Chinese government. He was sent immediately to Chungking to work in the Ministry of Information, where he "assisted" in the "preparation" of news reports for American journalists. White, in other words, began his career in journalism as a salaried PR man for the Chinese Nationalists at a time when China was at war with Japan and desperate for continued support from the West. His duty was to manipulate American public opinion, or, as he put it, to "turn out the proper stories to elicit the proper and desired response in all the various circles so important to China." Moreover, notwithstanding the obvious conflict of interest, White worked simultaneously as a stringer for several American news organizations, including *Time*. As John Hersey, the magazine's Far Eastern editor at the time, later admitted, "I dare say it was most unusual for a correspondent of an American journal to be working for a foreign government."

White resigned his position and became a full-time correspondent for Henry Luce's *Time* magazine in June 1939. Considering that Luce, the China-born son of Protestant missionaries, was the most visible, outspoken, and influential advocate—not to say cheerleader—that China had in the United States at the time, White's change in employers meant little actual change. Writing rhapsodically, about Chiang Kai-shek and his wife; heaping up hyperbole about Chinese accomplishments, past and present; denying Mao Tse-tung's charges about governmental corruption and the plight of China's peasantry—this was White's job while serving the Chinese Nationalists, and it remained his job at *Time*.

According to Hoffmann, throughout these years of "enlightened journalism," as Luce liked to call it, White "never questioned whether his early, often misleading reports from Chungking had shaped expectations and thus helped to fuel the disappointment and debate over who 'lost' China. His diaries and correspondence offer no hint that he ever wondered if a better-informed American public might have averted the China debacle and the State Department purges that succeeded it." John Service, one of the principal foreign service officers in Chungking at the time, conjectured that "if the United States had been able in 1945 to shed some of its illusions about China, to understand what was happening in that country and to adopt a realistic policy in America's own interests, Korea and Vietnam would probably never have happened."

By the end of World War II, even White had grown weary of Luce's distortions of foreign affairs in the name of "what ought to be," and he left *Time* in mid-1946. White had not appreciated the frequent rewriting of his columns by Whittaker Chambers, who presided over *Time*'s foreign desk. The staunchly anti-communist Chambers had correctly noticed that White's dispatches from China had veered sharply to the political left, that just as White had once glorified the Chinese Nationalists, so now White's contacts with the affable Chou En-lai led him to glamorize the Chinese Communists.

The unemployed White quickly discovered that the brand "left wing" had virtually become an appendage to his name, and, by his own admission, no national publication or organization would hire him. However, his 1947 book *Thunder Out of China*, which liberals loved and conservatives panned as simplistic and naïve, reopened doors for him professionally, and for a short time he worked for the *New Republic*.

By the late 1940s and early 1950s, White had fully imbibed the Cold War mind-set of a Manichaean world struggle between capitalism and communism, between consummate good and hideous evil. He covered the Cold War from Paris, where he lived a comfortable life as a correspondent for the Overseas News Agency. He moved among the "inner few" of

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elite journalists who met Europe's key statesmen at off-the-record sessions and "filtered," in White's words, "much of the politics of Europe as our guests wished them to be reported to the American public." Included in this "filtering" was White's practice of clearing his stories about Western leaders with the individuals themselves, even encouraging their edits and censorship.

White abandoned journalism for a few years in the late 1950s to pursue a career as a novelist, but he returned to cover the 1960 presidential campaign. White's 1961 bestseller, *The Making of the President 1960*, broke new ground in American journalism, not only because it integrated the narrative flow of fiction into newswriting, but because it highlighted the previously ignored "private side" of the candidates and their political campaigns. The writing was crisp, the pace and plotting dramatic. But as usual with White, the end result was hagiography. Inevitably seduced by power and his own proximity to it, White became the model of what Larry Sabato termed "lapdog journalism." White was not the sole lackey light in the Fourth Estate, which by this time had virtually become the fourth branch of the federal government. Nor was White alone in romanticizing the Kennedys, for this had already become an American pastime. But as Ben Bradley indelicately put it, "Teddy sucked up to the Kennedys in ways I would rather not know about."

In the same breathless tones in which White had successively glorified the Chinese Nationalists, the Chinese Communists, and the postwar European alliance against the forces of evil, so now did he see the 1960 election as "an all-American morality play with large characters; a vast landscape; a series of dramatic confrontations; and a virtuous hero cast as a latter-day cowboy armed with ideas, riding a jet plane in search of votes, intent on saving America." From White's perspective, Kennedy reigned from the hallowed "Oval Office," a room never before honored with capital letters. Kennedy's eighteen-button telephone was like "the sword and the mace in the politics of the middle ages." As White declared in his legendary article in *Life*, which he allowed Jacqueline Kennedy to edit and rewrite, the famed thousand-day presidency was "Camelot" incarnate, when "once there was a spot, for one brief shining moment . . . "

White continued his Making of the President series into the 1970s, but the novelty of his style of journalism had long ceased to be novel. Although he was embarrassed by how younger journalists applied his method, White was the pioneer in emotionally sloppy personal journalism. His incessant fawning upon the politically powerful, particularly Richard Nixon, also gained him little favor with his colleagues in his later years, but they respected him nonetheless as a trailblazer in their field. Teddy White died in 1986, confident in his belief that he had transcended the "enlightened journalism" of his old friend and sometime nemesis Henry Luce. This was his ultimate illusion.

MLA PRIZES

TWELVE PRIZES FOR BOOKS will be awarded in 1996 by the Modern Language Association. The deadline for all prizes except the Lowell Prize is May 1, 1996. The deadline for the Lowell Prize is March 1, 1996.

Only books published in 1995 may compete for the annual prizes; for the biennial prizes, books published in the two preceding years are eligible. Some prizes are open only to members of the MLA. Each prize consists of a cash award and a certificate. Publishers should send four copies of each book and a cover letter to: MLA Prizes, 10 Aster Place, New York, NY 10003; telephone: 212-614-6406; fax: 212-533-0680.

CALL FOR ENTRIES

Story magazine has issued a Call for Entries for its fourth annual Short Short Story Competition sponsored by Smith Corona. *Story* is a magazine of literary discovery for promising new writers.

Manuscripts of 1,500 words or less will be accepted. All entries must be original, unpublished, and not submitted elsewhere until the winners are announced in the spring 1996 issue of *Story*. Multiple entries are welcome as long as each entry is accompanied by the $10 entry fee. All entries must be postmarked by October 31, 1995.

For complete rules and entry form, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to: STORY Short Short Story Competition, Dept. PR, 1507 Dana Avenue, Cincinnati, Ohio 45207.

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The Reader Replies

The Red Room

In "The Red Room" (Spring 1995), Linda H. Davis states that in 1899 Stephen Crane "was overseeing a lifeless series called Great Battles of the World, which Kate Lyons, the common-law wife of the late English writer Harold Frederic, was researching and actually writing." Harold Frederic was born in Utica, New York, in 1856; his best-known novel, *The Damnation of Theron Ware*, was set in New York. He died on October 19, 1898. Apparently Crane, dying of tuberculosis, was helping out his friend's widow by giving her remunerative work to do. A biographer should be expected to be accurate about such facts and sensitive to such implications.

EDWARD L GALLIGAN
Kalamazoo, Michigan

LINDA H. DAVIS replies: Edward L. Galligan caught me in an error about Harold Frederic, who was indeed an American writer living in England at the time Stephen Crane knew him. I knew that, but forgot it, as I had not yet written about Frederic in my biography of Stephen Crane, which is still very much a work-in-progress. I thank Mr. Galligan—and others—for reminding me.

I also agree with him about Crane's kindness to Kate Lyons, and my biography will fully credit both Stephen and Cora Crane for their many kindnesses to Kate Lyons, the Frederic children, and others. But it would not have been appropriate for me to write about that in "The Red Room: Stephen Crane and Me," as it is not relevant to the theme of that piece. I do, however, disagree with Mr. Galligan's other implication: That because of Crane's kindness to Kate Lyons, it was unkind or insensitive of me to comment on the quality of the work itself. "Great Battles of the World" is indeed lifeless—it is virtually unrecognizable as Crane's work. And when a writer puts his name to something, he—or she—must take the heat.

Cleanth Brooks Remembered

A bit surprised to find James Gollin saying in the Spring 1995 AMERICAN SCHOLAR: "In 1964—in its modest way it was one of the Kennedy administration's most inspired appointments—Brooks was asked to serve as cultural attaché at the U.S. Embassy in London." I suppose that JFK sent the nomination to the Senate straight from the Arlington Cemetery.

BERNARD SINSHEIMER
Boulogne, France

JAMES GOLLIN replies: According to U.S. State Department records, Cleanth Brooks's appointment as Cultural Affairs Officer, London, was effective on May 31, 1964, and enlarged on June 3, 1964, to Cultural Attaché. It would thus appear that Bernard Sinsheimer's dig at my accuracy is justified.

But Dr. Paul Claussen, head of the Special Projects Division of the State Department Historian's Office, points out that the background checking and paperwork for such an appointment generally took "at least six months, and often as long as a year." This would date the offer and acceptance of the appointment at least as far back as the end of November 1963 and probably further back than the week of confusion and anguish that followed President Kennedy's death.

So it seems likely that my memory was correct and that Brooks's was a Kennedy appointment.

Joseph Wood Krutch

I read with great interest Robert Rowley's article "Joseph Wood Krutch: The Forgotten Voice of the Desert," in the Summer 1995 issue. While it is true that Dr. Krutch may no longer be a household word, I hasten to report that he is by no means totally neglected or forgotten.

In 1971, the Humane Society of the U.S. created the Joseph Wood Krutch Medal for individuals who had made a "significant contribution toward the improvement of life and the environment."

Dr. Krutch was selected for this honor because the motivation of the Humane Society of the U.S. to prevent cruelty to and suffering of animals and Dr. Krutch's lifetime commitment to humane efforts were identical.

AMY FREEMAN LEE
Houston, Texas

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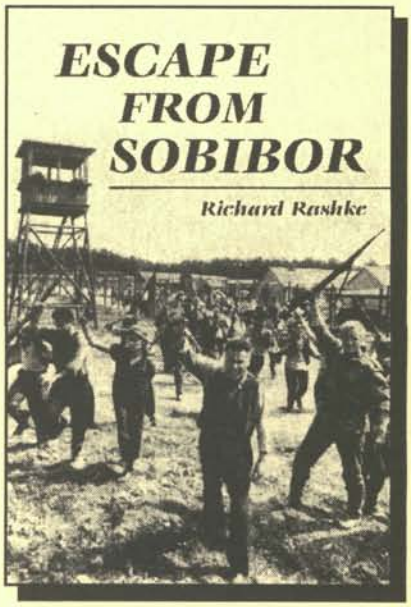

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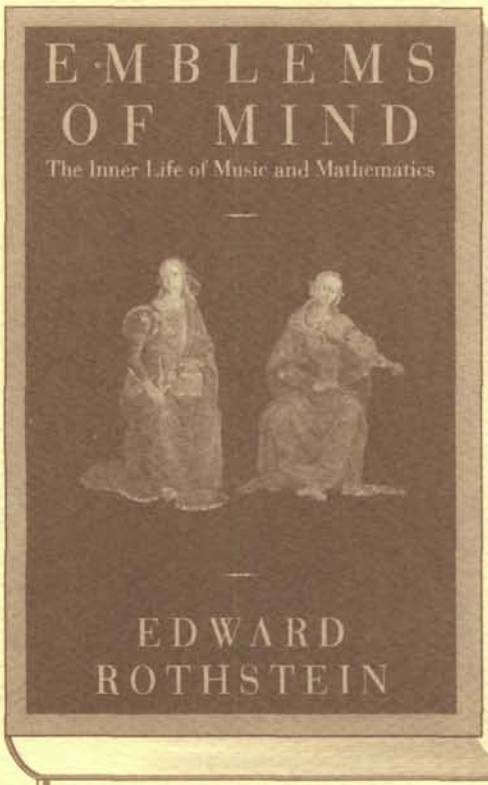

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